



NEWS ROUNDUP

07 FEBRUARY 2025 [08:00 am]

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ABS CBN

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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Concentrations in the atmosphere of carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, reached a fresh high of 422 parts per million in 2024 the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) has said.

After another record-breaking year for global temperatures in 2024, pressure is rising on policymakers to step up efforts to curb climate change.

The last global scientific consensus on the phenomenon was released in 2021 through the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, but scientists say evidence shows global warming and its impacts have since been unfolding faster than expected.

Here is some of the latest climate research:

CRITICAL POINT

The world may already have hit 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 F) of warming above the average pre-industrial temperature - a critical threshold beyond which it is at risk of irreversible and extreme climate change, scientists say.

A group of researchers made the suggestion in a study released in November based on an analysis of 2,000 years of atmospheric gases trapped in Antarctic ice cores.

Scientists have typically measured today's temperatures against a baseline temperature average for 1850-1900. By that measure, the world is now at nearly 1.3 C (2.4 F) of warming.

But the new data suggests a longer pre-industrial baseline, based on temperature data spanning the year 13 to 1700, which put warming at 1.49 C in 2023, the study published in the journal Nature Geoscience said.

OCEAN CHANGES

The warming of the Atlantic could hasten the collapse of a key current system, which scientists warn could already be sputtering.

The Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC), which transports warm water from the tropics to the North Atlantic, has helped to keep European winters milder for centuries.

Research in 2018 showed that AMOC has weakened by about 15% since 1950, while research published in February 2024 in the journal Science Advances suggested it could be closer to a critical slowdown than previously thought.

In addition, with the world in the throes of a fourth mass coral bleaching event — the largest on record — scientists fear the world's reefs have passed a point of no return.

Scientists will be studying bleached reefs from Australia to Brazil for signs of recovery over the next few years if temperatures fall.

EXTREME WEATHER

Ocean warming is not only fuelling stronger Atlantic storms, it is also causing them to intensify more rapidly, with some jumping from a Category 1 to a Category 3 storm in just hours.

Growing evidence shows this is true of other ocean basins. In October 2024 Hurricane Milton needed only one day in the Gulf of Mexico to go from tropical storm to the Gulf's second most powerful hurricane on record, slamming Florida's west coast.

Warmer air can also hold more moisture, helping storms carry and eventually release more rain. As a result, hurricanes are delivering flooding even in mountain towns like Asheville, North Carolina, inundated in September 2024 by Hurricane Helene.

FORESTS AND FIRES

Global warming is drying waterways and sapping moisture from forests, creating conditions for bigger and hotter wildfires from the U.S. West and Canada to southern Europe and Russia's Far East.

Research published in October in Nature Climate Change calculated that about 13% of deaths associated with toxic wildfire smoke during the 2010s could be attributed to the climate effect on wildfires.

Brazil's Amazon in 2024 was in the grip of its worst and most widespread drought since records began in 1950. River levels sank to all-time lows last year, while fires ravaged the rainforest.

That added concern to scientific findings earlier last year that between 10% and 47% of the Amazon will face combined stresses of heat and drought from climate change, as well as other threats, by 2050.

That could push the Amazon past a tipping point, with the jungle no longer able to produce enough moisture to quench its own trees, at which point the ecosystem could transition to degraded forests or sandy savannas.

Globally, forests appear to be struggling. A July 2024 study found that forests overall failed to absorb the year before as much carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as in the past, due largely to the Amazon drought and wildfires in Canada. That means a record amount of CO₂ entered the atmosphere.

In addition, scientists with the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration found in December 2024 that while the vast Arctic tundra has been a carbon sink for thousands of years, rising wildfire emissions mean the tundra is now releasing more carbon than it stores.

VOLCANIC SURGE

Scientists fear climate change could even boost volcanic eruptions. In Iceland, volcanoes appear to be responding to rapid glacier retreat. As ice melts, less pressure is exerted on the Earth's crust and mantle.

Volcanologists worry this could destabilize magma reservoirs and appears to be leading to more magma being created, building up pressure underground.

BUSINESS WORLD

[Year begins with warmest January despite shift towards cooling La Niña](#)

Last month was the world's warmest January on record, continuing a streak of extreme global temperatures despite a shift towards the cooling La Niña weather pattern, European Union (EU) scientists said on Thursday.

January extended a run of extraordinary heat, in which 18 of the last 19 months saw an average global temperature of more than 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times, the EU's Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) said in a monthly bulletin.

That was despite the world shifting from the El Niño warming pattern — which helped make 2024 the world's warmest year on record — and turning towards its cooler La Niña counterpart, which involves the cooling of equatorial Pacific waters, and can curb global temperatures.

“The fact that we're still seeing record temperatures outside of the influence of El Niño is a little surprising,” said Samantha Burgess, Strategic Lead at the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, which runs the C3S service.

El Niño peaked more than a year ago, Ms. Burgess noted.

The global average temperature in January was 1.75C higher than in pre-industrial times.

Copernicus assesses that La Niña has not yet fully developed, and the world is currently in neutral conditions between the two phases. Other data models can vary, with US scientists indicating last month that La Niña conditions had formed.

Even if La Niña does fully emerge, Ms. Burgess said its cooling effect may not be enough to temporarily curb global temperatures — which are also affected by factors like the extreme heat seen in other ocean basins, and the main driver of climate change: emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases.

“By far and away the largest contributing factor to our warming climate is the burning of fossil fuels,” she said.

Scientists at Berkeley Earth and the UK Met Office have said they expect 2025 to be the third-warmest year on record — cooler than 2024 and 2023 because of the shift towards La Niña, though uncertainties remain about how the phenomenon will develop.

Globally, average sea surface temperatures in January were the second-highest on record for the month, exceeded only by January 2024.

DAILY TRIBUNE

[Leaders discuss green investments, urge collaboration for growth, climate action](#)

By: Carl Magadia

Multisectoral leaders gathered Wednesday to discuss how green investments can drive economic growth while addressing climate change, stressing the need for cooperation among lawmakers, financial institutions, and private investors to shape policies for sustainable development.

University of the Philippines (UP) Law Center Dean Darlene Marie Berberabe highlighted the importance of collaboration in shaping sustainable development policies.

DBM Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman announced a 152% increase in climate change-related expenditures, from P457.4 billion in 2024 to P1.156 trillion in 2025, underscoring the government's commitment to climate finance.

Meanwhile, Undersecretary Maria Luwalhati C. Dorotan-Tiuseco of the Department of Finance (DoF) marked a significant milestone: the People's Survival Fund (PSF) has received a P1 billion allocation for 13 climate adaptation projects and six project development grants, benefiting local government units (LGUs) nationwide.

"It is going to cost a lot of money, so we look for key areas where the private sector wants to fund para hindi na gagastos ang gobyerno," she explained during the "Green Financing Reforms: Empowering Private Sector Participation for Sustainable Growth" forum at the Grand Hyatt Manila on Wednesday.

Call for Private Sector Engagement

A panel discussion, moderated by Atty. Ephyro Luis Amatong, former Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Commissioner and Program Director of the SAFER Growth Program, focused on how the private sector can integrate sustainability into financial decision-making.

SEC Commissioner McJill Bryant Fernandez stressed the importance of creating an investment climate that prioritizes sustainable projects. "We need all government agencies to be on the same page and ensure proper monitoring of sustainability efforts," he said.

Fernandez also emphasized the role of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in the green economy, urging financial institutions to support their transition to sustainable business models and include them in the green agenda.

Assistant Governor Lyn Javier of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) discussed the central bank's initiatives in sustainable finance, saying, "We have institutionalized relief

measures for smaller banks affected by extreme weather events. Resilience is important, but we must also prioritize adaptation.”

Javier also highlighted BSP’s focus on financial inclusion, raising the single borrowers’ limit by 15% to facilitate more sustainable investments. “No one should be left behind in addressing the sustainability agenda,” she added.

Practical Green Investment Approaches

Pinky Padronia, Senior Associate Director of the Bankers Association of the Philippines (BAP), shared a pragmatic perspective on green finance. “There is merit in going green, but we must balance economic growth with sustainability,” she said. “For us to move forward, our lending must be put to good use.”

Padronia also noted that green bonds in the Philippines are consistently oversubscribed, demonstrating strong investor demand. “We want to convert green to gold,” she said, underscoring the financial potential of sustainability investments.

Professor Rowaldo Del Mundo, Associate Dean at the UP College of Engineering, stressed the importance of data transparency in validating green financing initiatives. He pointed out that greenhouse gas (GHG) calculation and verification are essential to ensuring credibility, transparency, and sustainability.

Philippines’ Future in Green Financing

Panelists agreed that inter-agency collaboration, financial incentives, and regulatory alignment are essential to scaling green finance in the Philippines.

As the country positions itself as a leader in sustainable finance within ASEAN, stakeholders are encouraged to leverage the growing green bond market and government-backed sustainability programs.

The forum concluded with remarks from Director Jacqueline Joyce Espenilla of the UP Institute of Government and Law Reform (IGLR), who emphasized that sustainable business practices must align with economic growth.

With the momentum around green finance reforms continuing to grow, experts and policymakers are optimistic about the future of a sustainable, climate-resilient financial ecosystem in the Philippines.

MANILA STANDARD

[Noveleta flood control project set in motion](#)

By: Dennis Abrina

The DPWH set in motion its Noveleta Flood Control Project to ultimately put an end to the persistent problem of inundations in the town particularly during the rainy season.

DPWH Flood Control project manager Leo Mendoza, Noveleta Mayor Dino Chua, and municipal engineer Ariel Olaes witnessed the project launch on Wednesday.

President Marcos directed the DPWH to resolve the long-standing flood problem in Noveleta and neighboring towns in Cavite province.

The Noveleta floodway project is part of a bigger Cavite Flood Control Project involving a chain of structural and non-structural flood mitigation measures in Cavite.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

100 disaster-resilient homes awarded to residents of La Carlota City

By: Nanette Guadalquiver

The City of La Carlota in Negros Occidental has provided disaster-resilient houses for 100 families using the cement bamboo frame technology.

In a statement on Thursday, the city government said it is implementing the housing program in collaboration with the Habitat for Humanity, Base Bahay Foundation, Hilti Foundation, and the provincial government.

Built in a community called Luis Jalandoni Village, also known as Jacky Ville, located in Barangay Ayungon, 96 houses were turned over to beneficiaries on Tuesday after four units were given to the initial beneficiaries in November 2023.

The beneficiaries include those evicted by court orders, displaced by government projects, or residing in disaster-prone areas.

“This is not just about building houses, it’s about rebuilding lives,” Mayor Rex Jalandon said.

The beneficiaries, who possess titles to their home lots provided by the city government, contributed 300 hours of sweat equity to build their homes under the mayor’s Land for the Landless Program.

The lots have a minimum area of 80 square meters, while the floor area is 25 square meters.

Cement bamboo frame homes are resistant to typhoons, earthquakes, fires, and insect infestation.

Jalandon said they are planning to also construct a community center and install solar-powered streetlights in the community.

He said 130 more houses would be constructed at Jacky Ville.

The Luis Jalandoni Village Project is named after the late city mayors Luis “Nonoy” Jalandoni Jr. and Luis “Jacky” Jalandoni III for their exemplary work and service to the people of La Carlota.

Senator: Building climate-resilient school buildings a necessity

By: Wilnard Bacelonia

A senator on Thursday emphasized that building climate-resilient school facilities is no longer a choice but a necessity, as the Philippines continues to face frequent natural disasters that threaten students' safety and disrupt learning.

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian, in a statement, also called for innovative and collaborative solutions to address the country's classroom shortage, particularly in disaster-affected areas, urging the government to explore multiple funding sources beyond the national budget.

"As one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, constructing climate-resilient school buildings is no longer an option but a necessity," he said.

In 2024 alone, 1,855 schools sustained damage from natural calamities, requiring PHP6.6 billion for classroom repairs and PHP5.3 billion for the replacement of 1,846 classrooms, according to the Department of Education (DepEd).

Despite increasing its Quick Response Fund (QRF) to PHP3 billion, the budget remains insufficient to restore affected schools.

Thus, Gatchalian welcomed DepEd's partnership with the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Center, which aims to accelerate classroom construction.

DepEd's agreement with the PPP Center is expected to fast-track the construction of 15,000 disaster-resilient classrooms, benefiting 1,600 schools in nine regions.

It is also implementing Republic Act 12076, or the Ligtas Pinoy Centers Act, which mandates the construction of permanent evacuation centers to prevent schools from being used as temporary shelters.

Gatchalian also proposed a counterpart program where local government units (LGUs) and the national government share responsibility for building schools, allowing for faster, simultaneous construction of disaster-resilient classrooms.

"We need to explore multiple solutions to ensure our students have safe and sturdy learning spaces. By pursuing these innovations, we can make real progress," he added.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Heavy to intense rains likely over Luzon, Visayas due to shear line](#)

By: Arlie O. Calalo

Southern Luzon and the Visayas will experience heavy to intense rains due to a shear line or the convergence of hot and cold air on Friday, the national weather bureau said on Friday.

Weather specialist Grace Castañeda of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said that a volume of rainfall from 100 to 200 millimeters is forecast over Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Albay, Sorsogon and Northern and Eastern Samar.

"Numerous flooding events are likely and also landslides particularly in moderate to highly susceptible areas," she warned.

Meanwhile, the northeast monsoon or "amihan," will be experienced over Metro Manila, Cagayan Valley, Cordillera Administrative Region, Aurora, Bulacan and Bataan where overcast skies with rains will prevail.

The same weather system is expected to bring isolated light rains over the rest of Luzon, the state-run weather agency said.

The easterlies - winds coming from the east and passing through the Pacific Ocean that carry humid, warm weather - have been affecting Mindanao where partly cloudy to cloudy skies will be visible over the next 24 hours, the state weather bureau said.

Level of disaster preparedness improving

The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) has acknowledged improvements in the level of disaster preparedness among Filipinos but reiterated that much more needs to be done to build a resilient Philippines.

Speaking at the Bagong Pilipino Podcast, OCD Administrator Ariel Nepomuceno said that while Filipinos have become more knowledgeable in dealing with calamities, these events have also intensified.

"We have seen improvements, specifically on the use of scientific data with Hazard Hunter or Geohazard maps," Nepomuceno said, referring to the tools available for hazard assessment.

These tools are crucial for enabling people to make informed decisions in preparing for or mitigating disasters, especially given that around 20 typhoons visit the country annually, alongside the risk of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

"With these platforms, the people already know the hazards in their specified locations. We are equipping them with knowledge on the dangers they are facing — whether these are flood-prone, landslide-prone, and the like," he said.

"In fact, for typhoons, we give warnings as early as three days before the onset of the cyclone," he added.

He vowed to continue collaborating with the media to provide timely and adequate warnings for disasters and emphasized the importance of investing in the youth, whose mindsets are easier to mold.

Nepomuceno also cited Japan, which, despite being located on the Pacific Ring of Fire like the Philippines, is not listed on the World Risk Index. The Philippines tops this list.

"This only means that we still need a lot of interventions, and we have to work on our culture. While Japan has a lot of infrastructure projects, individually you also don't see them throwing away trash on the streets," Nepomuceno said.

He noted that disaster preparedness and climate change remain low on Filipinos' list of priorities.

[Opinion] Crucial climate target missed

There is no dearth of dire warnings about the impact of global warming, but the one recently issued by renowned climatologist James Hansen should send alarm bells ringing even louder.

In a study he co-wrote, Hansen declared that the goal to keep warming at 2 degrees Celsius "is now dead." He attributed the demise to the amount of greenhouse gases pumped into the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels.

Hansen and his colleagues forecast temperatures to hover at or above 1.5 C before hitting 2 C by 2045.

If that projection holds, climate change would become more impactful, they said. The extreme weather that has been occurring with alarming regularity in the past years will become the norm. The polar ice sheets will melt at a faster rate, and island states and coastal communities will find themselves struggling to cope with rising sea levels.

We may already be headed in that direction. The past two years have seen global temperatures reaching record highs. And last January was the warmest January on record at 1.75 C, higher than the 1.5 C preindustrial threshold set during the climate summit in Paris in 2015.

The Paris accord was hailed as a landmark in the world's crusade against global warming. Today, it has become a memorial for broken promises and weak political will.

Every year, a climate conference is held to keep the spirit of the Paris accord alive. Pledges to phase down fossil fuels, increase the use of renewable energy and halt deforestation are among the targets announced with great fanfare.

Sadly, the pledges are mostly unfulfilled and lay dormant until the next conference. The participants then go through the same carousel, and the cycle continues.

The burning issue has always been fossil fuels. The world can't seem to shake off its craving for oil, coal and natural gas, a craving that is whetted by the giants of the energy industry.

In 2022, the global oil and gas industry turned in a profit of \$4 trillion, from an average of \$1.5 trillion in recent years.

Coal is still the world's biggest source of electricity generation. In 2023, the market value of coal mining was \$1,989 billion.

The fossil fuel industry has even flexed its influence during climate summits. The last two Conference of the Parties, or COP, were held in the United Arab Emirates and Azerbaijan, which are petro states.

Controversy stalked the summit in Dubai after the chief of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co., Sultan Al Jaber, was appointed COP president.

Al Jaber further stoked criticism after he was quoted as saying there is no science which indicates that fossil fuel phaseout is necessary to keep global warming within 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Kevin Anderson, a colleague of Hansen's, frowns at the increasing presence of fossil-fuel entities in climate conferences; "...the policy process has abdicated its responsibilities, opting instead for short-term acquiescence with business as usual, rather than offering strong, transparent and cogent leadership," Anderson lamented.

He adds: "After decades of half-truths, delusion and outright lies from those in positions of power, and often from their advisers as well, we now find ourselves facing severe risks of disastrous outcomes."

Another climate scientist, Jonathan Overpeck, echoes the concern of his fellow climatologists. If the use of fossil fuels is not phased out, "climate change, and not just the warming, will get much more costly. Weather and climate disasters of the type we're already seeing more of will continue to get a lot worse," Overpeck said.

Many countries set a high goal for reducing emissions from burning fossil fuels, only to miss the mark by a wide margin. They are, however, not held accountable for failing to make the grade.

It is this lack of accountability that prevents climate goals from getting accomplished. There has to be an established framework in which those who are more responsible for climate change should be held accountable correspondingly.

At the same time, those who are more vulnerable deserve greater protection from the effects of climate change and equitable compensation for whatever loss or damage they suffered.

Without accountability, climate targets will never be fully met.

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