



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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By: Chinky O. Rondina

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## **RAPPLER**

### **[\[Opinion\] A surprise win for climate survival?](#)**

By: Mark Hertsgaard and Kyle Pope

The Iran war is also a climate war. Beyond its terrible human costs, the war's disruptions of oil, gas, fertilizer, and other shipments are another reminder of the risks inherent in basing the world economy on fossil fuels. The war's jets, missiles, and aircraft carriers, and the tankers, refineries, and buildings they blow up, represent millions of tons of greenhouse gas emissions that further imperil a climate system that is already "very close" to a point of no return, scientists say, after which runaway global warming could not be stopped. Nevertheless, petrostate leaders around the world continue doing their utmost to stave off a desperately needed course correction.

## **PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY**

### **[Pangasinan, UNDP partner to improve disaster, climate resilience](#)**

By: Elisha Marie Arguel and Krisha Mae Lavarientos

The Provincial Government of Pangasinan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) strengthened their partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under the Strengthening Institutions and Empowering Localities Against Disasters and Climate Change (SHIELD) Programme.

## **THE BUSINESS TIMES**

### **[Climate risks, great power rivalry the top concerns for South-east Asian nations: survey](#)**

By: Lionel Lim

Countries in South-east Asia are becoming increasingly concerned over the twin threats of risks posed by climate change and being caught in the middle of the US-China rivalry.

## **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

## **THE MANILA STANDARD**

### **[CCC forms advisory body to push gender equality in climate actions](#)**

By: Marita Moaje

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) is strengthening efforts to integrate gender equality into the country's climate agenda by rolling out the implementation phase of the Nationally Determined Contribution Gender Action Plan (NDC-GAP) 2024–2030.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## CEBU DAILY NEWS

### [EXPLAINER: Rising temperatures, climate risks, and what it means for the public](#)

By: Chinky O. Rondina

Rising temperatures are becoming more noticeable, especially during the warm and dry season, with May expected to bring the most intense heat.

Heat index levels in parts of the Visayas remain elevated, with conditions possibly shifting from “extreme caution” to “danger” levels.

Jhomer Eclarino, weather specialist of PAGASA Visayas, said that the country is experiencing the dry season, with heat expected to intensify in the coming weeks.

What’s behind rising temperatures?

He added that if more sustainable policies are not followed, temperatures may continue to rise, increasing long-term climate risks. PAGASA stands for the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration.

And it’s not just happening here.

Temperatures broke March heat records across the United States, Mexico, Australia, across Northern Africa, and through parts of Northern Europe.

Climatologist and weather historian Maximiliano Herrera called the extreme March temperatures “by far the most extreme heat event in world climatic history” and said on social media that the next few days would be “much worse.” He tracks extreme weather.

Eclarino explained that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) considers an increase of 1.5 degree to 2 degrees Celsius in global temperature as a critical threshold that should not be exceeded.

In Asia, “dozens of thousands of monthly records” were smashed by 30 to 35 degrees (17 to 19 degrees Celsius) margins, Herrera also told the Associated Press.

Once this level is surpassed, significant climate changes may be experienced.

These changes may include hotter days and warmer nights, stronger and more unpredictable storms due to shifts in frequency and intensity, and uneven rainfall patterns, where some areas may experience heavy rains while others face drought.

Eclarino noted that some of these impacts are already being observed.

## Understand the heat index

As temperatures rise, the heat index becomes a major concern.

It refers to how hot it feels on the body, combining air temperature and humidity.

Even if temperatures are lower, high humidity can make conditions feel significantly hotter.

PAGASA classifies the heat index in four levels: caution, extreme caution, danger, and extreme danger.

In Central Visayas, current conditions fall under “extreme caution,” but may reach higher levels if the heat intensifies.

## How to protect yourself against rising temperatures

Prolonged exposure to a high heat index may lead to heat stress, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke, especially during peak hours between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

To reduce risks, the public is advised to stay hydrated, avoid unnecessary outdoor activities, and seek cooler or shaded areas.

Wearing light-colored clothing and using umbrellas or caps can also help reduce heat exposure, particularly for those working outdoors.

## INSIDE CLIMATE NEWS

### [Behind the Scenes: How Climate Change Is Reshaping Forests](#)

By: Kiley Price

The world's forests are simultaneously climate powerhouses and victims, sucking carbon from the air while facing myriad global warming impacts—from wildfires to pest outbreaks.

Recent research found that climate change is already driving widespread disturbances in European forests and, by the end of the century, will likely transform the landscapes that communities depend on.

My colleague Bob Berwyn has been covering climate science and forests for decades, and recently wrote a story about this unsettling forest forecast. I asked Bob to tell me more about how he first got started reporting on forests—which are much more diverse than people may realize—and explain what this research could mean for the future of these critical ecosystems.

When did you first become interested in forests?

I've been interested in forests since I was very young and wanted to know where they came from and why they grew in some places and not others, so I started learning about the geological history of Earth, and how forests grew after big glaciers and ice sheets retreated from North America and Europe.

And for me, growing up in a part-European culture, forests were also places that held mysterious and powerful life forces, manifesting in stories about fairies and druids.

Have there been any moments that really struck you while reporting on climate change's impact on forests?

In the early 2000s, my 11-year-old son asked why all the huge pine forests around our Colorado neighborhood were turning brown and red. I was reporting on a destructive epidemic of pine beetles that was causing the die-off, but it was still hard to describe to Dylan how climate change had tipped the balance against trees that had stood for a century or more, and were part of his outdoor playground growing up.

The overwhelming outbreak killed about 90 percent of mature lodgepole pines growing across millions of acres in less than a decade. All the scientists studying the event pointed at a warming climate and more severe droughts as the trigger, stressing trees and promoting beetle reproduction, a double whammy.

A few days after my son's question, I took him along to an interview with a U.S. Forest Service scientist in an area where the bugs were spreading, along Swan Mountain Road, near a favorite

patch of edible mushrooms scattered through thin tufts of grass and pine needles on the forest floor. About half the trees were already marked as dead by their rust-colored needles, and the rest were doomed.

It was hot and windless. At one point, the scientist asked us to stop talking and listen. After a few seconds, we heard and felt a faint, pulsing vibration—the sound, she said, of millions of beetles chewing through the nutrient-carrying phloem layer just beneath the bark.

The damage was mostly invisible, but it was happening everywhere at once. The researcher explained that spring had come so early and summer lasted so long that the insects were breeding an entire second generation within the seasonal cycle, something that had never been recorded before the 1980s. That all but guaranteed that the remaining trees would be overwhelmed, and soon after, the mushroom patch would disappear.

Our sadness mirrored the collective shock of communities around the West mourning the loss of forests and landscapes that had seemed timeless, with a huge death toll of billions of long-revered trees—piñon pines, ponderosa, high elevation spruce and fir trees and even adaptable aspens all succumbing to climate-related disturbances.

How do changes in forests affect the broader landscape?

One good example is a beetle-caused die-off of piñon pines in the Southwest, also in the early 2000s. The pine nuts of the piñon were an important food source for Native American tribes in the region for thousands of years, and are still culturally important and have spiritual value. But so many of the mature seed-carrying trees died that it became nearly impossible for some people to find them.

Major changes in forests also affect the land and how water moves across it. When trees die or burn, rain falls on bare soil instead of leaves and needles, running off more quickly and carrying sediment downhill. Slopes once held together by roots can loosen. In mountain headwaters, those changes can ripple into rivers that supply farms, towns and hydropower plants far from forests.

Can you tell me about the recent study you covered on European forests?

Forest disturbance across Europe could more than double by the end of the century with continued global warming, according to the research, which published in March. The study showed how different types of climate impacts intensify each other. It focused on European forests, but there are similar processes happening everywhere around the world.

It's a warning sign, along with a lot of other recent research, that forests and trees, in general, are struggling in a climate that's already 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the average climate in which these forests first started growing.

The study was interesting because it used artificial intelligence to analyze forest landscapes at a very detailed scale, down to plots the size of a couple of football fields. That level of detail helped researchers show in a spatially realistic way how the disturbances can spread.

And the conclusions are that, if warming keeps up at the current rate, there will be widespread changes, with more patchy forests, more stands of younger trees, some areas where trees will be lost for the foreseeable future, or where new types of trees move in.

Is there any way to prevent this?

If we stop burning fossil fuels and heating the planet, we can perhaps avoid some of the worst-case endings of massive, permanent forest loss, or the loss of iconic species like redwoods and giant sequoias or Joshua trees. And also, we should stop cutting down older, naturally growing forests and try to protect the forests that are left.

The good news is that forests have existed on Earth for much, much longer than humans, which means they've survived some pretty extreme climate cycles of warm and cold. That means they will most likely persist through the human-caused warming era. But exactly what kind of trees will grow where, and for how long, is uncertain.

For this week's "Postcards From," Bob shared a photo with his son from one of their forest adventures in Colorado.

"Trees that my son climbed in the early 2000s have since succumbed to beetles, drought and extreme heat, like this centuries-old Douglas fir. In the background are stands of lodgepole pines turning brownish-orange after being killed by mountain pine beetles," Bob said.

"This is part of a group of Douglas firs that have had core samples taken to show climate records going back a few centuries."

## PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

### [Pangasinan, UNDP partner to improve disaster, climate resilience](#)

By: Elsha Marie Arguel and Krisha Mae Lavarientos

The Provincial Government of Pangasinan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) strengthened their partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) under the Strengthening Institutions and Empowering Localities Against Disasters and Climate Change (SHIELD) Programme.

The signing was held on March 31, 2026, at Urduja House in Lingayen, Pangasinan.

Funded by the Government of Australia, the SHIELD Programme carries a total investment of AUD 20 million (about PHP 812 million) from 2021 to 2028, supporting efforts to build institutional and community resilience against disasters and climate change across selected areas in the Philippines.

UNDP implements the program in collaboration with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Office of Civil Defense (OCD), and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), along with consortium partners such as UN-Habitat, the Philippine Business for Social Progress (PBSP), and the National Resilience Council Foundation Inc.

Through this partnership, Pangasinan aims to improve its institutional capacity and empower communities using science-based approaches to disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation.

#### Disaster innovations

The SHIELD Programme introduces modern tools and technologies to improve disaster preparedness and response, including disaster-response drones for hazard mapping, rapid damage assessment, and emergency operations, as well as the rollout of a Typhoon Watch application to enhance early warning systems at the provincial and local levels.

The program will also support risk mapping, data platforms, value chain analysis, and the development of investment-ready resilience projects.

Governor Ramon Guico III emphasized the importance of sustainable and forward-looking strategies in addressing disaster risks.

“This program will really help us in the long term. We hope that we can relocate them to safer places,” Guico said.

He added that there is a need to focus on long-term solutions on top of the province’s proactive disaster response

“We have been spending billions of pesos just to protect our province mates every year, but we have never actually thought of allocating a budget for mid-term and long-term solutions,” he added.

Guico also called for policy improvements to better support local government units (LGUS) in disaster preparedness.

“Operationally, it’s very challenging for LGUs to operate with all of those restrictions. We need policies that will allow us to respond better and prepare better,” he said.

#### High-risk areas

Pangasinan, identified as one of the 10 most disaster-vulnerable areas in the country due to its exposure to multiple hazards such as flooding, storm surge, and extreme weather conditions, joins Cagayan and Pampanga as part of the final batch of provinces engaged under the program.

These areas complete the roster of priority locations nationwide, alongside Metro Manila and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARRMM).

Meanwhile, UNDP representative Christophe Bahuet underscored the urgency of improving resilience as a development and economic priority.

“Climate resilience has become a priority because climate change and natural disasters are impacting people’s lives and disrupting economic activities,” Bahuet said.

The Australian Government also reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the Philippines in disaster preparedness and climate action.

With the partnership now formalized, Pangasinan is expected to implement science-driven solutions and build institutional capacity. This will empower communities and position the province as a model for disaster resilience and climate adaptation in the country.

## RAPPLER

### [\[Opinion\] A surprise win for climate survival?](#)

By: Mark Hertsgaard and Kyle Pope

The Iran war is also a climate war. Beyond its terrible human costs, the war's disruptions of oil, gas, fertilizer, and other shipments are another reminder of the risks inherent in basing the world economy on fossil fuels. The war's jets, missiles, and aircraft carriers, and the tankers, refineries, and buildings they blow up, represent millions of tons of greenhouse gas emissions that further imperil a climate system that is already "very close" to a point of no return, scientists say, after which runaway global warming could not be stopped. Nevertheless, petrostate leaders around the world continue doing their utmost to stave off a desperately needed course correction.

Now, a little-noticed ray of hope may be peeking over the horizon. At the United Nations COP30 climate summit last November, Saudi Arabia led a group of petrostates in vetoing calls to develop a "roadmap" to phase out fossil fuels globally; indeed, the words "fossil fuels" were not even mentioned in the final text agreed at COP30. But the 85 countries on the losing end of that veto may soon turn the tables.

Many of those governments will gather in Colombia on April 28 and 29 for a conference to begin a global transition away from oil, gas, and coal. Critically, the First International Conference on the Just Transition Away from Fossil Fuels will not be governed by UN rules, which require consensus, but by majority rule, thus preventing a handful of countries from sabotaging progress as petrostates did at COP30. What's more, the underlying terrain of this conference will no longer be principally politics but economics: not the words that canny negotiators can keep in or out of a diplomatic text, but the implacable market forces that shape the world economy, including the potential emergence of a de facto economic superpower.

The conference is co-sponsored by Colombia and the Netherlands, a pairing rich with symbolism: Colombia is the world's fifth largest coal exporter, Royal Dutch Shell one of the world's biggest oil companies. Conference organizers confirm that they have invited countries that endorsed the roadmap proposal at COP30, as well as high-profile leaders of sub-national governments, including California Governor Gavin Newsom, a presumed 2028 US presidential candidate.

The conference aims to begin drawing up the roadmap blocked at COP30. Energy and environment ministers of governments comprising a "coalition of the willing" will share plans to transition their economies away from oil, gas, and coal without leaving workers and communities behind. Joining them will be climate activists, leaders of indigenous peoples, trade union representatives, and other civil society voices, sharing ideas and experiences on how to make the abstract goal of phasing out fossil fuels a practical reality.

The goal of the conference is to agree on “actionable solutions” that follow-up meetings can refine so governments around the world can implement them. One area of focus will be how to phase out the \$7 trillion a year governments spend subsidizing fossil fuels — but to do so without punishing communities, workers, and tax bases that rely on such subsidies. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has urged the International Energy Agency to help create a “global platform” where public and private sector actors can “sequence the decline of fossil fuel investment with the rapid scale-up of clean energy.”

The secret weapon of the “coalition of the willing” gathering in Colombia is its potential to function as an economic superpower.

At least 85 countries at COP30 backed developing a roadmap to phase out fossil fuels. Included among them were Global North powers Germany, the United Kingdom, France, and Spain — the world’s third, sixth, seventh, and 12th biggest economies. Major Global South countries Brazil and Mexico, the world’s 10th and 13th biggest economies, also backed the measure.

Combine the gross national products of those 85 countries, and the total is \$33.3 trillion. That’s larger than the \$30.6 trillion GNP of the US, the world’s biggest economy, and considerably larger than the \$19.4 trillion GNP of China, the world’s second biggest economy.

That amount of economic heft gives those 85 countries enormous potential leverage. If the Just Transition conference can outline a credible roadmap for phasing out fossil fuels, it could send shock waves through financial markets, government ministries, and C-suites around the world. “A coalition of that scale signaling its intent to move beyond fossil fuels would send an unmistakable message that the age of oil, gas, and coal is ending, and the smart money is shifting,” Mohamed Adow, director of the nonprofit Power Shift Africa, said in an interview.

Money follows money. If a huge chunk of the global economy announces that it intends to leave fossil fuels behind — and releases transparent, convincing plans for doing so — private investors and government planners everywhere would have to question whether sinking new money into oil exploration, coal mining, or gas terminals makes financial sense or would instead leave them with virtually worthless stranded assets.

Much the same thing happened after the 2015 Paris Agreement. When governments pledged to limit temperature rise to “well below” 2 degrees Celsius and to aim for 1.5°C, public and private sector leaders began changing course. Fossil fuel expansions were scaled back, and renewable energy investments were boosted. Prior to the Paris Agreement, the planet was on track toward a hellish 4°C of temperature rise. Five years later, the emissions curve had bent to a 2.7°C future — still much too high, but a big step in the right direction, and proof that change is possible.

The scales could tilt even further if California joins the “coalition of the willing.” Adding California’s \$4.1 trillion GDP to the \$33.3 trillion of the 85 countries that backed a roadmap at COP30 — and subtracting that \$4.1 trillion from the rest of the US economy — yields an

economic superpower worth \$37.4 trillion, not far behind the \$50 trillion combined GDP of the US and China.

Governor Newsom has given every indication that he supports phasing out fossil fuels and wants to be seen as a global climate leader. “Don’t let what happens in Washington, D.C. shape your perception of my country,” he told a packed press conference at COP30. Newsom noted that during his years as governor, California grew from the world’s sixth to its fourth largest economy, even as two-thirds of the state’s electricity came from non-carbon sources. Calling US President Donald Trump’s withdrawal of the US from the Paris Agreement “an abomination,” Newsom vowed that California “will fill that void” by competing for the global market in green technologies.

The Just Transition conference underscores a point often missed in the usual narrative on climate change: the overwhelming majority of the world’s people — 80% to 89% of them — want their governments to take stronger climate action. Scientists have long been clear that phasing out fossil fuels is imperative to limit global warming to an amount our civilization can survive. This conference is an opportunity to flip the narrative and begin that urgent task.

## THE BUSINESS TIMES

### [Climate risks, great power rivalry the top concerns for South-east Asian nations: survey](#)

By: Lionel Lim

Countries in South-east Asia are becoming increasingly concerned over the twin threats of risks posed by climate change and being caught in the middle of the US-China rivalry.

The annual State of Southeast Asia Survey published by the Iseas-Yusof Ishak Institute on Tuesday (Apr 7) showed respondents ranking climate change and extreme weather events as the top challenge (60 per cent) the region faces, versus 55.3 per cent the previous year.

This was followed by intensifying rivalry between major powers (51.7 per cent) and domestic political instability (46.1 per cent).

The institute spoke to 2,008 respondents from all Asean member states for the survey, which is in its eighth edition, between Jan 5 and Feb 20.

#### Respondents

More than half of the respondents held a bachelor's degree, and 43 per cent came from the private sector, the largest affiliation group. Other respondents surveyed included those in academia, as well as regional and international organisations.

"This year's survey underscores the growing complexity of South-east Asia's strategic environment," said Ng Chee Khern, director and chief executive officer of Iseas-Yusof Ishak Institute.

"The findings show a region that is navigating external pressures, internal constraints and shifting global dynamics with increasing caution."

Concerns about climate change signal heightened public awareness of the economic, social and environmental impact of extreme weather events. Worries about climate change were particularly pronounced in the Philippines and Indonesia – two of the most exposed countries to extreme weather.

Concerns surrounding the intensifying friction between major economies ranked second at 51.7 per cent, a two-percentage-point increase from last year, and overtook worries about sluggish economic prospects in 2025.

China remains the most influential power in the region, but concerns about its growing influence remain significant.

At the same time, attitudes towards the US have become more mixed. While the US' security and strategic role remains important to many in South-east Asia, there is rising concern over Washington's leadership and economic policies.

#### Geopolitical concerns

More than half of the survey respondents (51.9 per cent) identified the leadership under US President Donald Trump as their top geopolitical concern.

At the same time, aggressive behaviour in the South China Sea ranked highly, coming in third.

China has often been accused of encroachments in the exclusive economic zones and territories of some South-east Asian states.

The survey findings showed that China remains the most influential economic and political-strategic partner, but the country's dominance is also making the region uneasy. About 55.4 per cent of respondents said they were worried about Beijing's growing regional influence.

If forced to choose between the two powers, 52 per cent of respondents this year said they would align with China versus 48 per cent with the US, reversing from last year's choice of the US over China.

The report noted that the shift highlights how "finely balanced" regional sentiments remain. Respondents continued to prioritise the importance of enhancing Asean resilience and unity as a way to fend off pressure from the two major powers.

Japan remains the most trusted major power for South-east Asia, with a significant share of respondents viewing it as a responsible stakeholder that respects and champions international law.

## CCC IN THE NEWS:

### THE MANILA STANDARD

#### [CCC forms advisory body to push gender equality in climate actions](#)

By: Marita Moaje

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) is strengthening efforts to integrate gender equality into the country's climate agenda by rolling out the implementation phase of the Nationally Determined Contribution Gender Action Plan (NDC-GAP) 2024–2030.

The CCC said last week that at the core of the rollout is the establishment of a Gender and Climate Change Advisory Group (GCAG), a multisectoral body tasked to lead the implementation.

It will finalize membership and guidelines, conduct stakeholder mapping and roll out capacity-building sessions for Gender and Development (GAD) focal points across agencies.

The GCAG will be co-chaired by CCC Commissioner Rachel Anne Herrera, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Analiza Rebueta-Teh and Philippine Commission on Women Deputy Executive Director Anita Baleda.

“The implementation of the NDC-GAP marks an important step for the Philippines. It moves us from mere recognition that climate change is not gender neutral, to concrete action, by putting gender and social inclusion squarely into how we plan, implement, monitor and improve our climate actions,” Herrera said.

The NDC-GAP 2024–2030 serves as the country's framework for integrating gender and social inclusion into climate mitigation and adaptation efforts, ensuring that policies and investments actively reduce inequalities and empower vulnerable sectors.

It stresses mainstreaming gender across all stages of climate governance, from planning and implementation to monitoring and evaluation, while strengthening accountability systems and coordination among agencies.

GCAG members committed to a unified implementation strategy for the six-year plan, clarified member roles and responsibilities, and identified immediate priority actions to sustain momentum across all government levels, noting the importance of coordinated action across government agencies.

Officials said the plan marks a shift from recognizing that climate change is not gender-neutral to institutionalizing inclusive, gender-responsive climate governance, aligned with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s goal of a climate-resilient Philippines. PNA

The GCAG also includes other key agencies, such as the Department of Agriculture, Department of Energy and Department of Transportation, along with the partner institution, the Department of Economy, Planning and Development.

The CCC said development partners such as the Agence Française de Développement and the Asian Development Bank are supporting the initiative, with technical assistance from the Miriam College-Women and Gender Institute.

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