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By: Ariel Rojas

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By: Joseph Bernard A. Marzan

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By: Raffy Ayeng

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Climate change seen displacing millions

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MANILA BULLETIN

Brazil says Amazon deforestation fell to the lowest level since 1988

SAO PAULO (AP) — Brazil's government announced Friday that annual deforestation in the Amazon fell to its lowest level since records began in 1988. Official satellite data showed the rainforest lost 3,335 square kilometers (1,300 square miles) from Aug. 2025 through July 2026, the period used to calculate the annual rate.

Philippine coffee output may fall below 30,000 MT as climate pressures bite

The Philippines may produce less than 30,000 metric tons (MT) of coffee this year as rising temperatures and agricultural disruptions such as El Niño threaten farms, prompting the industry to push for climate-resilient varieties and faster support for growers.

SUNSTAR

Cebu bamboo industry eyes growth
By: April Blanche Cabañog

THE bamboo industry in Central Visayas is looking to expand its commercial potential through sustainable construction, enterprise development, and stronger links between local producers and buyers.

Philhealth covers heat stroke, dengue

PHILHEALTH is stepping up health protection against extreme heat and heat-related illnesses, heeding President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s call for proactive government action on climate change.

PhilHealth mipahugot sa pagprotekta sa kahimsog

Gipahugtan sa PhilHealth ang proteksyon sa kahimsog batok sa grabeng kainit ug mga sakit nga naay kalabutan sa init, agig pagtubag sa panawagan ni Presidente Ferdinand Marcos Jr. alang sa aktibong aksyon sa gobiyerno batok sa climate change.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

GMA NEWS ONLINE

In Siargao, a new Climate Field School launches with a pioneering batch of 60 farmers and fisherfolk
By: Lou Albano

At the first Siargao Climate Week, a new climate field school for farmers and fisherfolk was launched in the Municipality of Del Carmen.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

PBBM orders creation of carbon market framework to attract investments, reduce emissions

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has ordered the creation of a national carbon market policy framework to attract investments in climate-friendly projects and support the country's effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

POLITIKO

Bilyon ang budget, libo ang resibo! COA flags DOT under Christina Frasco over P1.71B climate funds

The Department of Tourism (DOT) under Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco could account for just ₱284,113.50 in climate-related expenditures out of its ₱1.71-billion climate-tagged budget in 2025, while leaving its entire ₱4.58-million allocation for new tourism development activities untouched, according to the Commission on Audit (COA).

THE CHRONICLE

Siargao climate field school to train 60 farmers, fisherfolk
By: Alexander Lopez

BUTUAN CITY – A PHP80.7-million climate field school has been launched in Siargao to equip farmers and fisherfolk with science-based tools and knowledge to protect their livelihoods from increasingly unpredictable weather and other climate-related threats.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

Super typhoon Champi to head for Taiwan next weekend, may affect northernmost PH
By: Ariel Rojas

MANILA — Tropical cyclone Champi, which intensified into a super typhoon early Sunday, is forecast to head for Taiwan by the end of next week, according to PAGASA.

At 10 a.m., the super typhoon was located 2,090 kilometers east of southeastern Luzon, outside the Philippine area of responsibility.

It had maximum sustained winds of 185 kilometers per hour, with gustiness up to 230 kph and was moving westward at 25 kph.

Champi is expected to enter the PAR on Tuesday, October 20, morning or afternoon and will be then assigned the local name Rosal.

Rosal is less likely to make landfall over any part of the country.

It will move northwestward over the Philippine Sea and may slightly weaken before approaching Taiwan.

WIND SIGNALS POSSIBLE

Due to the expanse of the super typhoon's wind field, wind signals may be raised over parts of Bicol Region and Northern Luzon as early as Monday evening or Tuesday morning.

The storm's trough or extension may also bring scattered rains over the eastern parts of the country.

For Extreme Northern Luzon, much worse conditions are expected on Thursday and Friday.

Very strong winds up to signal no. 3 or 4 strength and heavy to intense rainfall may be experienced in Batanes and Babuyan Islands.

Rosal may exit the PAR on Saturday, October 24.

This Sunday, the prevailing weather systems are the Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) over Palawan and western Mindanao and the humid Easterlies over the rest of the country.

Cloudy skies with scattered rains are expected in Palawan, Zamboanga Peninsula, Basilan, Misamis Occidental, Lanao del Norte, Lanao del Sur, as well as in Quezon and Camarines Norte.

Metro Manila and the rest of the country will be warm and humid with likely isolated rain showers or localized thunderstorms in the afternoon or evening.

The country remains in a transition period toward the Amihan season, which could begin late October or early November because of El Niño.

The weather bureau earlier said that the prevailing strong to very strong El Niño over the tropical Pacific Ocean may peak in December and could result in a drier and warmer Amihan season.

DAILY GUARDIAN

CHED urges stronger ASEAN cooperation to future-proof higher education

By: Joseph Bernard A. Marzan

ILOILO CITY — Higher education institutions across Southeast Asia must strengthen regional cooperation to prepare for disruptions caused by artificial intelligence, climate change, geopolitical tensions and changing workforce demands, Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Chairperson Shirley Agrupis said.

Agrupis called for closer coordination among ASEAN member states to ensure that universities and colleges remain relevant, resilient and capable of responding to challenges beyond their control.

She delivered the keynote address at the opening of the 2026 Higher Education Week celebration organized by CHED and the Southeast Asian Ministers of Education Organization Regional Centre for Higher Education and Development (SEAMEO RIHED) in Iloilo City on Oct. 14.

The event brought together education ministers and university and college presidents from the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries.

The gathering also coincided with the Philippines' hosting of meetings of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In her address, Agrupis discussed the 34th SEAMEO RIHED Governing Board meeting, where regional education leaders emphasized stronger collaboration among ASEAN member states "to address the common concerns that beset us today".

The meeting also outlined regional initiatives intended to address the evolving needs of Southeast Asian higher education.

These included the Seventh Five-Year Development Plan, Common Space in Southeast Asian Higher Education, regional policy insights and the ASEAN International Mobility for Students (AIMS) Programme.

"What stood out to me was how many of these concerns are shared across our countries and how much we can accomplish when we learn from one another and work together," Agrupis said in her keynote address.

Agrupis identified artificial intelligence, climate change, geopolitics, international talent mobility and growing skepticism about the value of university degrees as major challenges confronting higher education.

She described these developments as “forces that universities cannot control, but must be able to anticipate and navigate”.

A 2025 policy brief by the Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia projected that artificial intelligence could account for 10% to 18% of ASEAN’s gross domestic product by 2030, equivalent to approximately USD 1 trillion.

However, the same policy brief indicated that only six ASEAN member states had adopted explicit national AI strategies.

These were Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Agrupis recalled a question raised during the UNESCO Transforming Education Summit in Paris, France, last July about whether artificial intelligence could eventually make universities obsolete.

“Will artificial intelligence and the rapid transformation of how knowledge is produced, accessed, and applied eventually make universities obsolete? […] My answer, when I represented the ASEAN, [was a] big ‘No’,” she said.

“I answered ‘No’ not because our universities are immune already to disruption, but because our region is taking concrete steps to build future-ready higher education systems,” she added.

Agrupis said universities must adapt to technological changes rather than view emerging technologies solely as threats to traditional education.

She also raised concerns about climate change and its potential consequences for public health, educational institutions and communities.

Citing projections from the University of Chicago’s Climate Impact Lab, Agrupis said an El Niño episode between September 2026 and February 2027 could result in 38,700 additional heat-related deaths.

The projection was associated with a 1.2-degree Celsius temperature increase in the later months of the period.

Of the projected deaths, 19,300 were expected in Indonesia, while the remaining 19,400 represented the combined estimate for the Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia.

“As a biologist myself, every single degree centigrade increase in temperature totally changes the ecosystem, both at the micro level and at the macro level,” the CHED chairperson remarked.

Agrupis also cited findings from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Higher Education Global Trends Report and World Bank data to highlight increasing international mobility.

The UNESCO report, released in May 2026, indicated that 7.3 million students had studied abroad, more than three times the number recorded in 2000.

Meanwhile, World Bank data showed that the share of immigrants with tertiary education increased from 22% in 2000 to 30% in 2020.

Agrupis also pointed to changing perceptions about the value of higher education among younger generations.

An April 2025 survey by employment platform Indeed found that 51% of Generation Z respondents, generally those born between 1997 and 2012, considered their college degrees a waste of money.

The same survey found that 68% believed they could perform their jobs without a college degree.

"They reveal a fundamental reality. The continuity and quality of higher education are increasingly shaped by forces that universities cannot control, but must learn to anticipate and navigate them," she said.

To address these challenges, Agrupis identified three interconnected priorities that education authorities, universities, colleges and other stakeholders must pursue to prepare higher education for the future.

These are anticipatory leadership, innovation that translates knowledge into practical solutions and sustainability that strengthens long-term resilience.

Anticipatory leadership

Agrupis said ASEAN higher education authorities are increasingly emphasizing anticipatory leadership, which focuses on preparing institutions for emerging challenges before they become critical.

"This means recognizing challenges before they come urgent, and preparing our institutions through policies, partnerships, and coordinated action," Agrupis said.

She cited discussions during the SEAMEO RIHED Governing Board meeting on how the Regional Initiative for SEA Higher Education (RISE) could advance shared priorities.

These priorities include digital transformation, teacher education and ASEAN GEMS Plus.

Agrupis also highlighted several regional policy documents intended to strengthen cooperation and innovation in higher education.

These included the ASEAN Ministerial Statement on AI-Enabled Teaching and Learning and Digital Transformation and the Framework for the ASEAN Centre of Excellence for Teacher Education and Development.

She also discussed ASEAN GEMS Plus, a Philippine proposal to expand opportunities for educational and research collaboration across the region.

The initiative builds on ASEAN Gems, an online platform developed by Education Malaysia Global Services that connects students across ASEAN with scholarship opportunities.

The proposed ASEAN GEMS Plus would expand the platform to include research grants, researcher mobility and innovation partnerships aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Agrupis also cited the Philippine Senate's ratification of the 2011 Tokyo Convention, formally known as the Asia-Pacific Regional Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications in Higher Education, on Sept. 7, 2026.

The convention seeks to facilitate the recognition of higher education qualifications across participating countries, supporting academic mobility and international cooperation.

She also highlighted the Education Philippines (EduPhil) Program, which aims to attract more foreign students to Philippine higher education institutions.

Agrupis stressed that anticipatory leadership is particularly important in preparing universities for climate-related disruptions and growing geopolitical tensions.

She said the Philippine government had already introduced measures intended to maintain educational continuity during emergencies.

Among these is CHED Memorandum Order No. 12, Series of 2025, which establishes policies and guidelines for Open Distance and e-Learning (ODeL) programs in higher education institutions.

The order increased the allowable distance education component of academic programs from 25% to 51% of total course units.

According to CHED data as of June 2026, 31 higher education institutions had been authorized to offer ODeL programs.

The policy provides institutions with greater flexibility to deliver instruction when circumstances prevent students and teachers from attending traditional classroom sessions.

“As we learned during the COVID-19 pandemic, disruptions may be difficult to predict, but our capacity to respond can be strengthened in advance,” Agrupis said.

“This is one way we are building greater flexibility into higher education, so that when circumstances disrupt classroom-based instruction, god forbid may El Niño not repeat what happened in the COVID-19 dilemma, learning can continue without compromising academic quality,” she said.

DAILY TRIBUNE

Carbon market plan offers income opportunities — BBM

By: Raffy Ayeng

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has issued Executive Order (eo) 127, which seeks to create income opportunities for Filipinos through environmental protection activities, including tree planting, forest conservation and pollution reduction.

The order mandates the formulation of the Philippine Carbon Market Policy Framework to support the country's climate commitments under the Paris Agreement, attract investments in green projects and establish rules for the trading of carbon credits.

Executive Secretary Ralph Recto said communities, farmers, businesses and other groups that help reduce pollution or absorb greenhouse gases could earn additional income through qualified environmental projects.

Under the framework, eligible projects could generate carbon credits that may be sold to companies or other buyers seeking to meet their climate commitments.

Recto cited communities that plant and protect trees as potential beneficiaries, since trees absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

"In other words, people can earn from planting and caring for trees, using clean energy, and engaging in other activities that help protect the environment. You will be given carbon credits for every activity proven to have reduced greenhouse gases, which can be sold," Recto said.

He stressed, however, that projects must meet government standards and undergo proper verification before qualifying for carbon credits.

Registry

Recto said the initiative could encourage investments in reforestation, sustainable agriculture, renewable energy and waste management while creating livelihood opportunities, particularly in rural communities.

"We're hitting two birds with one stone. The President wants to protect the environment while helping people earn more," he said.

Revenue from carbon credits could also help finance climate adaptation projects, including resilient infrastructure, water facilities and other essential services, Recto added.

Under EO 127, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will develop rules on project eligibility, carbon credit measurement and verification, and the sharing of revenues and other benefits.

The DENR will also establish a Philippine National Carbon Registry to monitor carbon credits and prevent double counting and other irregularities.

An interagency committee chaired by the Climate Change Commission, with the Department of Finance as vice chair, will oversee the development and implementation of the policy.

Climate change seen displacing millions

Up to 40.5 million people in South Asia may be forced to move by 2050.

NEW DELHI, India (AFP) — Climate change is threatening livelihoods and forcing people from their homes across South Asia, but technology and government action could help limit the damage, the United Nations migration chief told Agence France-Presse on Friday.

Rising seas, flooding and drought threaten homes and farmland, Amy Pope, director general of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), said during a visit to New Delhi.

In the Himalayas, she pointed to Nepal's 26 August disaster, when a mountain and glacier collapse triggered deadly flooding, where IOM sent humanitarian aid to help.

In a worst-case scenario, up to 40.5 million people in South Asia may be forced to move by 2050, according to IOM.

"When they can't produce food, when they can't feed their livestock, it increases the likelihood of displacement," said Pope. "The first adaptation is often for people to move."

Pope said climate change was also accelerating urbanization in India.

"As people seek shelter from heat, they're going into urban centers," she said.

The risks are particularly acute in South Asia, where vast populations and limited resources leave many communities vulnerable.

"There's a lack of urgency globally about the risks that vulnerable communities are facing," Pope said, warning that funding to help residents prepare for climate change remained inadequate.

"The cost of a humanitarian disaster is in the billions. The cost of investing in some of the resilience measures can be far less," she said.

Better data and artificial intelligence could help governments identify communities at risk before disaster strikes, Pope said.

MANILA BULLETIN

Brazil says Amazon deforestation fell to the lowest level since 1988

SAO PAULO (AP) — Brazil's government announced Friday that annual deforestation in the Amazon fell to its lowest level since records began in 1988. Official satellite data showed the rainforest lost 3,335 square kilometers (1,300 square miles) from Aug. 2025 through July 2026, the period used to calculate the annual rate.

The data released Friday underscore the success of Brazil's renewed efforts under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva to curb Amazon deforestation, reversing a surge under his predecessor, far-right President Jair Bolsonaro.

During Jair Bolsonaro's presidency, from 2019 to 2022, Amazon deforestation surged by about 60%, with more than 45,000 square kilometers (17,400 square miles) cleared, according to official data. Under Lula, deforestation has fallen 71% since 2023, the government said.

One of Lula's first moves after taking office in January 2023 for a third, non-consecutive term was to revive the Action Plan for the Prevention and Control of Deforestation in the Legal Amazon, known by its Portuguese acronym, PPCDAm. Launched in 2004 during his first administration, the plan had been shelved under Bolsonaro.

Lula brought back the environmental officials who developed the blueprint two decades earlier, appointing environmental champion Marina Silva — who led the Environment Ministry until she resigned in April to run for Congress — and João Paulo Capobianco, her former deputy and the current minister, to help carry it out.

How the government curbed deforestation
The plan has four pillars: strengthening monitoring and enforcement; promoting a sustainable economy; managing protected areas and determining how undesignated public forests should be used; and using regulations and financial incentives to curb deforestation.

Measures included restoring sanctions for illegal forest clearing detected by satellites, a practice seen as the most effective tool to curb deforestation that was halted under Bolsonaro. The government also proposed barring properties with illegal deforestation from receiving bank loans and allocated more funding to priority Amazon municipalities that demonstrated reductions in forest loss. It also funded efforts to fight environmental crime and develop subsidized credit for sustainable businesses in the Amazon.

"The formula is always the same, and it works. We saw it work in Brazil years ago and we're seeing it again now: determination, enforcement on the ground, fighting crime and enforcing the law," said Márcio Astrini, executive director of the Climate Observatory, a Brazilian network of environmental groups.

Astrini added that the deforestation rates announced Friday show that Brazil's pledge to reach zero deforestation by 2030 is achievable without compromising the country's economy.

" Agriculture has been setting production and export records while deforestation has fallen. Today's figures disprove the false narrative that protecting the environment holds back Brazil's development," he added.

Deforestation and other land-use changes are Brazil's largest sources of greenhouse gas emissions, which drive global warming. The stakes are especially high in the Amazon, which stores vast amounts of carbon dioxide and generates atmospheric moisture that helps regulate weather far beyond South America.

New president could determine future of the Amazon
Despite progress curbing deforestation, the Amazon faces threats from climate change, proposed legislation and a possible change in Brazil's presidency.

Degradation from wildfires, logging and drought affects about 40% of the Amazon and has outpaced clear-cutting in recent years. A strong El Niño, a periodic warming of the equatorial Pacific, could intensify those threats in 2026 and 2027 by bringing hotter, drier conditions that fuel wildfires.

Fire counts across the biome were near historic lows this year but have tripled since Oct. 4, when Brazilians voted in the first round of national elections. Authorities are investigating whether fires were deliberately set for political reasons ahead of this month's presidential runoff.
Sen. Flávio Bolsonaro, son of former President Jair Bolsonaro, won 47% of the vote, while Lula received 45%. The two face an Oct. 25 runoff.

The candidates offer sharply different visions for the rainforest. Climate and conservation experts warn that a Bolsonaro victory could reverse policies to curb deforestation. He has pledged to end illegal deforestation by 2029, a year ahead of Brazil's current target. Lula's reelection pledge goes further: zero net deforestation by 2030, with restoration offsetting all forest loss, legal or illegal.

Cristiane Mazzetti of Greenpeace Brazil said the record low deforestation rate reflects effective policies that could be at risk depending on who wins the presidential election.
"Congress has worked to weaken, delay and dismantle laws and regulations that help protect the environment," she said. "The next legislature will be even more hostile to environmental protection, and depending on the next federal administration, the risk of rollbacks and high deforestation rates will rise sharply."

Former Minister Silva said in a statement Friday that the deforestation reduction was a "historic achievement" for the Brazilian people and that the election outcome would be crucial to sustain it.

"Jair Bolsonaro's administration approached environmental protection and climate change with denial and a sweeping dismantling of environmental policies. Flávio has inherited those views and practices and intends to perpetuate them, as he has indicated on several occasions," she said.

"Those who deny the problem exists will certainly do nothing to address it."
Bolsonaro has denied climate change while portraying himself as an environmental defender, without detailing plans to protect the Amazon or support forest financing. He has called for modernizing environmental laws, which many environmentalists interpret as weakening them.
"Flávio Bolsonaro is a defender of the environment and of those who preserve standing forests and clean rivers," his campaign said.

Philippine coffee output may fall below 30,000 MT as climate pressures bite

The Philippines may produce less than 30,000 metric tons (MT) of coffee this year as rising temperatures and agricultural disruptions such as El Niño threaten farms, prompting the industry to push for climate-resilient varieties and faster support for growers.

Philippine Coffee Board Inc. (PCBI) chair Pacita "Chit" Juan said on the sidelines of the Second Philippine Coffee Sustainability Congress on Thursday, Oct. 15, that changing climate conditions are already affecting where certain coffee varieties can be grown.

In particular, rising temperatures are forcing high-altitude varieties such as arabica to be planted at higher elevations, reaching between 1,800 meters and 2,000 meters above sea level in coffee-producing areas such as Bukidnon province and Davao region.

"We might not even reach 30,000 MT because, at the rate things are going, coffee varieties that used to grow at lower elevations now need to be planted even higher since global temperatures have really risen," Juan said in Filipino.

The potential decline would reverse last year's improvement in domestic production, when the country's green coffee bean (GCB) output climbed to 35,645.64 MT from the 29,957- to 31,979-MT range recorded from 2022 to 2024, based on Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data.

Juan said adapting the country's coffee farms to changing climate conditions will take time because growers cannot immediately replace existing trees with more suitable varieties.

"From seed, it takes nine months to become a seedling, and once you plant it, it takes another two to three years to bear fruit. You are looking at a journey that isn't instant, which is why our solution is really to give farmers alternatives and more resistant varieties."

However, efforts to expand domestic production are also being slowed by strict accreditation requirements for seedling suppliers.

Juan said PCBI, alongside Sen. Kiko Pangilinan, is advocating for community nurseries that would allow farmers to grow planting materials directly from seed instead of relying solely on accredited suppliers.

The industry is also adjusting the varieties planted in lower-elevation coffee-growing areas such as Cavite and Batangas provinces, where growers are shifting toward more heat-resistant liberica, excelsa, and robusta.

To increase production in the short to medium term without waiting several years for newly planted coffee trees to mature, PCBI is also promoting the rejuvenation of existing trees.

The technique, demonstrated by Malaysian coffee expert Adam Esham, seeks to rehabilitate tall, mature liberica trees and restore their productivity instead of replacing them entirely.

Juan said PCBI is also working directly with local government units (LGUs) to accelerate support for farmers amid delays encountered at the national government (NG) level.

Among these initiatives is a partnership with Amadeo town, Cavite province, for the local production of organic fertilizer, alongside coordination with the Department of Agriculture's (DA) National Organic Agriculture Program (NOAP), to help reduce farmers' dependence on costly chemical fertilizers.

Explaining PCBI's focus on working directly with LGUs, Juan said agricultural interventions ultimately have to reach farmers at the local level.

She noted that LGUs directly provide many farm-level interventions, including paying agricultural workers, distributing fertilizers to growers, and constructing essential post-harvest facilities such as community coffee dryers.

Beyond adapting farms to climate change, PCBI stressed that the industry's priority should be increasing overall coffee production to meet domestic demand and reduce the country's heavy dependence on imports from its Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) neighbors, rather than focusing primarily on higher-priced specialty coffee.

PSA data showed that domestic coffee production remains dominated by robusta, which accounted for 25,731.07 MT in 2025, or more than two-thirds of the country's total output, followed by arabica, excelsa, and liberica. - Danielle T. Bayani

SUNSTAR

Cebu bamboo industry eyes growth

By: April Blanche Cabañog

THE bamboo industry in Central Visayas is looking to expand its commercial potential through sustainable construction, enterprise development, and stronger links between local producers and buyers.

The Cebu Bamboo Industry Development Council, in partnership with the Departments of Trade and Industry (DTI), Agriculture (DA), Science and Technology (DOST), and Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), convened industry stakeholders at the Central Visayas Regional Bamboo Congress 2026 on Oct. 15 at the Cebu Provincial Capitol.

With the theme “Bamboo Beyond Borders,” the congress brought together policymakers, industry leaders, agricultural experts, business owners,

construction professionals, and community representatives to explore opportunities to develop bamboo into a competitive and sustainable industry.

Cebu Gov. Pamela S. Baricuatro said bamboo could help generate livelihoods, create business opportunities, and address environmental challenges, particularly in rural communities.

She said expanding the industry could support climate-resilient infrastructure using locally available materials while helping address rural poverty and ecological vulnerability.

Industry leaders also emphasized the need to move bamboo beyond its traditional use as a rural resource and develop it into a commercially viable commodity that can generate economic activity across local communities.

Technical experts and government officials presented projects and applications aimed at expanding the industry’s market potential, including the Bamboo Carbon PH Project, which explores the role of bamboo plantations in carbon capture and climate change mitigation.

Discussions also covered bamboo’s structural strength, durability, and potential for sustainable construction. Presenters highlighted engineered bamboo as an alternative to conventional materials such as steel and timber, citing its potential cost and environmental advantages.

For micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), the congress offered insights into opportunities to tap into growing demand for environmentally friendly products.

The event also provided a venue for local growers, processors, and investors to establish supply connections and explore business partnerships.

Organizers said stronger links between farm-level producers and commercial buyers would help build a more stable bamboo value chain in Central Visayas.

The council aims to bring together government policy, academic research, and private investment to expand local manufacturing, establish quality standards, and position Central Visayas as a hub for sustainable bamboo innovations.

The industry's growth, however, will depend on translating these initiatives into viable businesses, reliable supply networks, and products that meet market requirements. / ABC

Philhealth covers heat stroke, dengue

PHILHEALTH is stepping up health protection against extreme heat and heat-related illnesses, heeding President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s call for proactive government action on climate change.

Anchored on the Unified National Agenda for Health, Philhealth is working with the Department of Health (DOH) as the weather bureau Pagasa warns of a strong El Niño persisting through mid-2027. The weather phenomenon brings rising risks of heat stroke, dehydration, asthma, hypertension, dengue and water-borne infections.

In support of this directive, Philhealth is urging families to register and visit their chosen Yakap clinic to access preventive and primary care benefits. This move aims to help protect the public against heat-related health risks.

Yakap program

Through the Yaman ng Kalusugan Program or Yakap, members can access consultations, appropriate laboratory and diagnostic tests and outpatient cancer screening. Eligible members may also receive up to P20,000 worth of essential outpatient medicines annually.

Regular checkups under the program can help detect and manage conditions that may worsen during extreme heat, such as hypertension, diabetes and respiratory diseases.

Philhealth reminds its members that the state insurer provides both outpatient and inpatient coverage. Through the Outpatient Emergency Care Benefit, non-admitted emergency room services are covered, including doctor consultations, diagnostic tests, imaging, emergency procedures and essential medicines.

Inpatient rates

For severe conditions requiring hospital confinement, Philhealth pays direct fixed case rates to accredited hospitals for seasonal infections and heat-related illnesses. The coverage includes typhoid fever (P19,500), heat fatigue (P18,135), sore eyes (P16,575), heat stroke or cramps (P12,675), acute gastroenteritis (P11,700) and chickenpox or moderate-to-severe dehydration (P7,800).

To register for Yakap, members can select their preferred clinic online through the Philhealth Member Portal or the eGovPH app. They can also register onsite at any Philhealth Regional Office or Local Health Insurance Office nationwide. / PR

PhilHealth mipahugot sa pagprotekta sa kahimsog

Gipahugtan sa PhilHealth ang proteksyon sa kahimsog batok sa grabeng kainit ug mga sakit nga naay kalabutan sa init, agig pagtubag sa panawagan ni Presidente Ferdinand Marcos Jr. alang sa aktibong aksyon sa gobiyerno batok sa climate change.

Nakatali sa Unified National Agenda for Health, ang PhilHealth nakigtambayayong sa Department of Health (DOH) samtang nagpasidaan ang ahensya sa panahon nga mao ang Pagasa bahin sa kusog nga El Niño nga magpadayon hangtod sa tungatunga sa 2027.

Ang maong weather phenomenon nagdala og taas nga risgo sa heat stroke, dehydration, asthma, alta presyon, dengue, ug mga impeksyon nga gikan sa tubig.

Isip suporta niini nga direktiba, giawhag sa PhilHealth ang mga pamilya nga magparehistro ug mobisita sa ilang gipili nga Yaman ng Kalusugan Program o Yakap clinic aron makakuha preventive ug primary care nga mga benepisyo.

Kini nga lakang nagtumong sa pagtabang sa pagpanalipod sa publiko batok sa mga risgo sa kahimsog tungod sa init.

Pinaagi sa Yakap, ang mga miyembro makakuha og mga konsultasyon, angay nga laboratoryo ug diagnostic tests, ug outpatient cancer screening.

Ang kuwalipikadong mga miyembro mahimo usab makadawat og hangtod sa P20,000 nga kantidad sa mahinungdanong mga tambal sa outpatient matag tuig.

Ang regular nga pagpaubos sa checkup ubos sa programa makatabang sa pag-ila ug pagdumala sa mga kondisyon nga mahimong mograbe sa panahon sa grabeng kainit, sama sa alta presyon, diabetes, ug mga sakit sa respiratoryo.

Gipahinumdoman sa PhilHealth ang mga miyembro niini nga ang state insurer naghatag og parehong outpatient ug inpatient coverages.

Pinaagi sa Outpatient Emergency Care Benefit, ang mga serbisyo sa emergency room nga dili kinahanglan ma-admit kay sakop, lakip ang konsulta sa doktor, diagnostic tests, imaging, emergency procedures, ug essential medicines.

Alang sa mga grabeng kondisyon nga nagkinahanglan og pagpa-admit sa ospital, ang PhilHealth nagbayad og direktang fixed case rates sa akreditadong mga ospital para sa mga impeksyon sa panahon (seasonal infections) ug mga sakit nga naay kalabutan sa init. Ang coverage naglakip sa typhoid fever (P19,500), heat fatigue (P18,135), sore eyes (P16,575), heat stroke o cramps (P12,675), acute gastroenteritis (P11,700), ug chickenpox o moderate-to-severe dehydration (P7,800).

Aron makaparehistro sa Yakap, ang mga miyembro mahimong mopili sa ilang gusto nga klinika online pinaagi sa PhilHealth Member Portal o sa eGovPH app. Mahimo usab silang magparehistro on-site sa bisan unsang PhilHealth Regional Office o Local Health Insurance Office sa tibuok nasod. / PR

CCC IN THE NEWS:

GMA NEWS ONLINE

In Siargao, a new Climate Field School launches with a pioneering batch of 60 farmers and fisherfolk
By: Lou Albano

At the first Siargao Climate Week, a new climate field school for farmers and fisherfolk was launched in the Municipality of Del Carmen.

Alongside a new Water Testing Laboratory and a DOST iHub, the Climate Field School for Farmers and Fisherfolk is located at the Surigao del Norte State University (SNSU) Del Carmen Campus.

A flagship recipient of the People's Survival Fund (PSF), the Climate Field School underscores the shift from climate policy to action. It aims to introduce science-driven adaptations tailored for small island-based ecosystems, as well as to establish an integrated approach to local resilience with robust science services, technological innovations and capacity-building for the community.

It all sounds technical and hifalutin but its main effect is something simple and tangible: Food and food security for the small island community.

“The Climate Field School serves as a training ground for our farmers and fisherfolks to improve their sources of livelihood amidst the climate vulnerabilities that our locality faces," Del Carmen Municipal Mayor Alfredo M. Coro II, said in a statement.

"Our project serves as the benchmark for other local government units in accessing the People’s Survival Fund, especially for small island municipalities,” he added. “By prioritizing data-backed tools, we ensure that our frontline producers are no longer at the mercy of unpredictable skies, but are actively secure in their food production.”

Speaking on behalf of the Climate Change Commission and its Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje, Assistant Secretary Romell Antonio O. Cuenca addressed local stakeholders, acknowledging that "climate change is not an abstract concept or a distant concern for Siargao."

"It is visibly altering your landscape through unpredictable weather and escalating extreme events. This is a direct, immediate threat to the food on your tables, the yield of your local fisheries, the stability of your water resources, and the world-class ecosystems that drive your livelihoods," he continued.

Meanwhile, SNSU President Dr. Rowena A. Plando said, "By integrating the Climate Field School, the Water Testing Laboratory, and the DOST iHub into our Del Carmen campus, Surigao del Norte State University pledges to remain the engine of localized science. We will translate high-level climate theories into practical, language-accessible technologies that our farmers and fisherfolks can apply daily to protect their yields and safe-keep our local water resources."

The Climate Field School has a pioneering batch of 60 farmers and fisherfolk, who are "not just students but are co-creators of climate-resilient agriculture," Dr. Joey G. Escauso, Campus Director of the SNSU–Del Carmen Campus said.

"Hazards are inevitable, but disasters need not be. By providing reliable scientific data on water quality and giving our local communities direct access to science-related interventions, we are equipping Siargao with the digital and technical infrastructure needed to transform local producers from victims of climate shifts into victors of sustainable development," DOST Undersecretary for Regional Operations Sancho A. Mabborang said.

The municipality of Del Carmen has long been climate forward. It was able to grow its Mangrove Reserve from 4,200 hectares of mangroves in 2012 to more than 4,800 hectares in 2025 through education and ecotourism training and opportunities instead of policing; local government officials did house-to-house dialogues with fishers and community-based information campaigns about mangrove protection and to abandon illegal fishing.

In 2024, the Del Carmen Mangrove Reserve was designated as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.

According to a statement from the Climate Change Commission, Surigao del Norte has made significant progress, with 16 of its 22 LGUS having submitted their Local Climate Change Action Plan. Del Carmen is among the LGUs with such plan, which the CCC looks to as a practical investment tool in prioritizing critical interventions like the Field School.

"Climate finance should not only be used to build physical infrastructure like seawalls; it must also build knowledge and human capacity. The PSF is designed to provide resources for concrete, community-driven adaptation initiatives so that local governments can fund solutions that respond directly to their actual, localized climate risks," Borje said.

"Ultimately, the success of the Siargao Climate Field School will not be measured simply by the number of people trained inside these walls. It will be measured outside—in the practices adopted, the risks reduced, the livelihoods strengthened, and the communities made safer," the CCC said in the statement.

According to a Facebook post by the SNSU Office of the President, "under the existing agreement, the Municipal Government of Del Carmen will manage the Climate Field School for two years before its eventual turnover to SNSU."

"The launch also highlighted the role of the Climate Field School in equipping farmers and fisherfolk with practical knowledge and skills to respond to climate-related challenges and adopt sustainable livelihood practices. The initiative marks an important step toward building local capacity through science-based training, innovation, and community engagement," it said. — GMA News

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

PBBM orders creation of carbon market framework to attract investments, reduce emissions

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has ordered the creation of a national carbon market policy framework to attract investments in climate-friendly projects and support the country's effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Under Executive Order (EO) No. 127, President Marcos directed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to develop the Philippine Carbon Market Policy Framework, which will establish rules and guidelines for the country's participation in local and international carbon markets.

Carbon markets allow companies and countries to buy and sell carbon credits generated by projects that reduce or remove greenhouse gas emissions.

"There is a need to formulate a national carbon market framework aligned with international standards, through a whole-of-government approach, to support the achievement of the country's NDCs (nationally determined contributions)," the EO stated.

Nationally determined contributions are climate action plans submitted by countries under the Paris Agreement, to which the Philippines is a party, outlining their commitments to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and addressing climate change.

The EO, signed on October 13, seeks to facilitate access to climate financing, technology, and investments while supporting the implementation of projects that generate carbon credits.

The framework will establish guidelines for carbon credit trading, including requirements for participating companies, approval of projects, monitoring of transactions, and benefit-sharing arrangements.

It will also provide safeguards to ensure that carbon market activities comply with national policies and international standards.

To oversee the implementation of the framework, President Marcos created the Inter-Agency Committee on Carbon Markets (IACCM), chaired by the Climate Change Commission (CCC), with the Department of Finance (DOF) as vice chair.

The committee will coordinate government policies, review the implementation of the framework, and approve reasonable processing fees for carbon market applications and certifications.

Its members include the DENR, Department of Energy (DOE), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), and Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

President Marcos also designated the DENR as the country's national authority for carbon markets, responsible for overseeing and authorizing carbon emission reduction projects and ensuring compliance with environmental policies.

The DENR will also establish and maintain the Philippine National Carbon Registry, a digital system for tracking carbon credits and related transactions.

The agency is required to submit the proposed framework to the inter-agency committee for review and approval within 30 days from the effectivity of the order.

The order shall take effect immediately upon publication in the Official Gazette or in a newspaper of general circulation.

POLITIKO

Bilyon ang budget, libo ang resibo! COA flags DOT under Christina Frasco over P1.71B climate funds

The Department of Tourism (DOT) under Secretary Christina Garcia Frasco could account for just ₱284,113.50 in climate-related expenditures out of its ₱1.71-billion climate-tagged budget in 2025, while leaving its entire ₱4.58-million allocation for new tourism development activities untouched, according to the Commission on Audit (COA).

In its 2025 annual audit report obtained by Bilyonaryo, COA found that only 0.02% of the department's ₱1.712-billion climate change expenditure-tagged budget could be identified in accounting records as spending on climate-related programs and activities.

The finding raised questions about the DOT's ability to track and account for funds earmarked for climate initiatives, even as the tourism sector faces growing risks from extreme weather and other climate-related disruptions.

Auditors also flagged the department's low utilization of its Tourism Development Fund (TDF), with only ₱2.39 million, or 34.04%, of its ₱7.02-million available funds spent in 2025.

More strikingly, not a single peso of the ₱4.58 million newly allocated for the year was utilized by December 31.

The amount was intended to support the National Accreditation Campaign Program, which forms part of the department's efforts to improve standards in the tourism industry.

Instead, all reported TDF spending came from ₱2.45 million in continuing appropriations carried over from 2024.

COA's examination of the climate-tagged budget also uncovered discrepancies between expenditures reported by DOT personnel and amounts auditors could trace in the department's accounting records.

The DOT Budget Division reported ₱4.01 million in climate-related activities under its Quality Management System program.

However, auditors found only ₱284,113.50 in climate-related expenses recorded in the department's 2025 general ledger.

COA also said it could not adequately verify the specific climate adaptation activities supposedly covered by several major programs carrying climate expenditure tags.

In response, DOT management said it had begun addressing the deficiencies in its climate expenditure tagging system.

The department said it was planning a workshop with technical assistance from the Climate Change Commission to improve the identification and reporting of climate-related programs.

It was also developing standardized criteria for classifying climate expenditures and strengthening the links between budget allocations, actual projects and measurable outcomes.

COA recommended that the DOT submit detailed and verifiable utilization reports, clearly assign accountability for climate-related spending and establish a comprehensive climate adaptation plan.—Politiko.com.ph

THE CHRONICLE

Siargao climate field school to train 60 farmers, fisherfolk
By: Alexander Lopez

BUTUAN CITY – A PHP80.7-million climate field school has been launched in Siargao to equip farmers and fisherfolk with science-based tools and knowledge to protect their livelihoods from increasingly unpredictable weather and other climate-related threats.

The Siargao Climate Field School for Farmers and Fisherfolk-Future Philippine Journey, a flagship recipient of the People's Survival Fund, was launched at the Surigao del Norte State University-Del Carmen Campus (SNSU-Del Carmen) together with a new Water Testing Laboratory and Department of Science and Technology (DOST) iHub.

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) said the facilities represent a shift from national climate policies to practical, community-based measures designed to strengthen the resilience of small island communities.

"Climate change is not an abstract concept or a distant concern for Siargao, you are living on its frontlines," CCC Assistant Secretary Romell Antonio Cuenca said in a statement Thursday, noting the threats posed by unpredictable weather and extreme events to fisheries, water resources, food security and livelihoods.

Del Carmen Mayor Alfredo Coro II said the field school would serve as a training ground where farmers and fisherfolk could improve their livelihoods while adapting to the municipality's climate vulnerabilities.

"Our project serves as the benchmark for other local government units in accessing the People's Survival Fund, especially for small island municipalities," Coro said.

The project will initially accommodate 60 farmers and fisherfolk who will undergo hands-on learning intended to help them apply climate-resilient practices in agriculture and fisheries.

SNSU President Dr. Rowena Plando said integrating the field school, Water Testing Laboratory and DOST iHub into the Del Carmen campus would enable the university to translate climate science into practical technologies that communities can use to protect their livelihoods and water resources.

DOST Undersecretary for Regional Operations Sancho Mabborang said the facilities would also give communities access to scientific data, water-quality services and science-related interventions as they confront climate hazards.

The CCC said the project demonstrates how the People's Survival Fund can finance not only physical infrastructure but also knowledge, scientific capacity and community-driven adaptation measures responsive to specific local climate risks.

CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert Borje said the field school reflects the national goal of building a climate-smart and climate-resilient Philippines and translates strategies under the National Adaptation Plan into action at the community level.

The commission said the real measure of the field school's success would be seen beyond the facility through "the practices adopted, the risks reduced, the livelihoods strengthened, and the communities made safer." (PNA)

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