



NEWS ROUNDUP

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By: Sheldeen Joy Talavera

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A high of 38 degrees Celsius in Yamanashi Prefecture in July. A daily low of 31.4 C in Itoigawa, Niigata Prefecture, in August. A 27-degree day in Tokyo in November.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Climate resilience PH priority, UN told](#)

By: Bernadette E. Tamayo

Climate resilience and food security are the key development priorities of the country, Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations Antonio Lagdameo informed the UN Security Council, the Department of Foreign Affairs said.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[\[Opinion\] The folly of waste-to-energy](#)

By: Charlie V. Manalo

Proponents hail waste to energy (WTE) as a hitting-two-birds-with-one-stone solution to runaway trash and energy pollution.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

Lower energy storage system cost to spur RE adoption — analysts

By: Sheldeen Joy Talavera

The declining cost of energy storage systems (ESS) may facilitate the broader adoption of renewable energy (RE) sources, according to analysts.

The recent technological advancements have made solar and wind energy, integrated with ESS, “competitive with best fossil fuels,” said Paolo Pagaduan, renewable energy and just transition senior lead at Asian People’s Movement on Debt and Development.

“As BESS (battery ESS) technology continues to advance, we can expect further reductions in price,” he said in a Viber message last week.

ESS refers to a facility capable of absorbing energy directly from an energy source and storing it for a time period, and injecting stored energy when prompted, according to the Department of Energy (DoE).

Mr. Pagaduan said that ESS ensure uninterrupted power supply by storing energy and injecting it into the grid when the “sun isn’t shining” or the “wind isn’t blowing.”

“This process is almost instantaneous, maintaining a steady power flow, unlike traditional fossil fuel plants that require significant startup time and aren’t as stable as often claimed,” he said.

Data from the DoE showed that about 334 megawatts of capacity are expected from BESS this year.

Jose M. Layug, Jr., president of the Developers of Renewable Energy Advancement, Inc., said ESS is critical to manage the variability of intermittent renewable energy sources.

“[ESS] can also ultimately serve as baseload generation also if and when it becomes more affordable,” Mr. Layug said.

Citing the data from the International Renewable Energy Agency, Mr. Layug said that BESS prices fell by 71% to \$776 per kilowatt-hour between 2014-2020.

He said that ESS allows better integration of renewable energy in the grid and optimizes grid operations, as well as it is favorable to implement in islands for “decentralized electrification support.”

Mr. Pagaduan said, however, that all ESS require extraction of transition materials, such as copper and lithium, which are “frequently exploited through extractivist systems that harm host communities, local economies, and the environment.”

“It is therefore essential to adopt principles and parameters for ensuring rapid, equitable, and just transition to clean energy systems,” Mr. Pagaduan said.

FINANCIAL TIMES

[\[Opinion\] Sinking skyscrapers, new beaches: Chicago faces the climate crisis](#)

By: Patti Waldmeir

Chicago is sinking. From melting glaciers to underground hotspots, global warming could threaten the city's elegant skyscrapers and breathtaking lakefront, climate scientists say.

Of course, this Midwestern metropolis is far from alone in suffering the scourge of subsidence. Venice, Jakarta, New York and cities along the US East Coast are all sinking too. But marooned inland, Chicago doesn't share their rising sea-level worries — although it was built on marshland.

According to a recent study by Northwestern University, there's a "silent hazard" beneath the streets: subsurface heat islands that deform the ground. Northwestern researcher Alessandro Rotta Loria says it's the first study to quantify the effect of "underground climate change" on urban infrastructure, which threatens cities around the world, especially those built near water.

He and his team collected three years of temperature data from 150 underground sensors and found that beneath some buildings in the Chicago Loop — those in the central business district that create the famous skyline — it can be 18F hotter than under local Grant Park, a large green area near Lake Michigan. He says underground climate change is the subterranean corollary of the "surface heat islands" in many US cities, but more subtle.

Garages, basements, tunnels and underground transportation systems emit heat into the ground and in a dense area such as the Loop, this causes it to expand or contract. Rotta Loria says subsurface heat islands "don't kill people" and they aren't likely to cause buildings to collapse, but adds that "in the long term, underground climate change can be very costly" because it can cause or exacerbate shifts, tilts and cracks in buildings and infrastructure, and significantly raise repair and maintenance costs.

But subterranean climate change isn't the only danger. According to the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration, Chicago has sunk at least four inches in the past 100 years due to much earlier climate change: the melting of the glaciers that covered the area thousands of years ago. Land continues to rise and fall after losing its ice-age burden. Jacob Heck, Great Lakes regional geodetic adviser for NOAA's National Geodetic Survey, says the land in the Great Lakes basin has tilted up or down by a combined two feet over the past century.

So the bad news is: Chicago is sinking. But the good news might be that postglacial sinking has been going on for so long, Heck says he's not too worried about the threat to Chicago's architectural masterpieces: "By the time those structures went up we were aware of those effects so I wouldn't be as worried about Chicago skyscrapers as I'd be about old buildings in Venice."

And Seth Stein, emeritus professor in the department of Earth and planetary sciences at Northwestern, says he's more worried about the wild fluctuations that have been normal in Lake Michigan water levels for decades. "The single biggest effect on the city of Chicago is lake flow," he tells me. As a Chicagoan, I agree: four years ago, I was writing about record high lake levels and disappearing beaches. This year, the lake has receded so much that there are beaches I've never seen before.

This year's historically mild Midwest winter means Great Lakes ice cover has hit its lowest point since records began in 1973. Stein points out that Chicago's skyscrapers are mostly protected from Lake Michigan by the "buffer zone" of its large lakeside parks. He predicts "we will be dealing with very large climate effects in future" but most likely they will be "things we haven't even really thought about yet. Because things are engineered for the way they are now — not the way they will be."

Still, the city has reinvented itself before. In the mid-19th century, city planners jacked up the level of Chicago — built on marshland just above the water table — by as much as 14 feet, so they could install underground sewers. And in 1900 they reversed the flow of the Chicago River so it would no longer dump waste in Lake Michigan. Chicago has long literally defied gravity: it may be sinking; but it's not sunk yet.

MANILA BULLETIN

Pasig City rolls out environment, business-centered initiatives

By: Patrick Garcia

The Pasig City local government continues to prove it is one of the pioneers in the inception and implementation of different environment and business-centered programs aimed not just at improving its citizens' way of life and livelihood, but also the preservation and nourishment of the environment.

During its weekly Monday morning ceremony, Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto showcased the different projects spearheaded by its City Environment and Natural Resources Office and Solid Waste Management Office, such as the the ICE (Innovation for Circular Economy) Hub and the Garbage Collection by Administration.

Last August, individuals employed in the Materials Recovery Facilities (MRFs) and micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in Pasig City underwent a seven-day learning incursion that focused on innovation and the circular economy.

The training aimed to help the local government share knowledge and teach skills that would enable the future establishment of a permanent ICE Hub in the city and the first-ever Circular Economy Hub in the country.

The hub will become the "central aggregator, incubator, and connector" of the circular economy solutions of Pasig.

The participants were given the opportunity to explore the concept and importance of the circular economy at a deeper level, and learn the various ways that governments and societies to eliminate the problem of waste.

Participants were tasked to create and present business concepts or proposals that could possibly hit two birds with one stone – to help ease the issue of garbage while creating jobs or generating revenue.

Meanwhile, Pasig City also implements its Garbage Collection by Administration method wherein the local government unit (LGU) itself leads in the collection and management of the city's garbage to reduce some of its spending expenses since it will no longer need contractors for the service within five years.

Sotto also shared the ongoing feasibility study on the implementation of the Garbage Collection by the Administration in the whole Pasig City and the procurement of additional garbage trucks, among others.

Since April of last year, the local government, led by the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) and SWMO, started conducting the Waste Analysis and Characterization Study (WACS).

CENRO and SWMO Chief Allendri Angeles described WACS as an in-depth study using science and data-gathering to quantify the amount of garbage that is thrown away by Pasiguenos daily as well as the percentage of each kind of waste.

The results of this study will be included in the updates of the city's 10-year Solid Waste Management Plan, Angeles said.

The local government is conducting the system in cooperation with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and the private sector.

Maybunga Rainforest Park

During his remarks, Sotto praised the Maybunga Rainforest Park personnel for the numerous improvements it made to ensure the preservation of the park which is considered as the last lung of Pasig.

The 12 new and improved amenities of the park are as follows:

- 1) Senior Citizens' Park
- 2) Kiddie Playland built with world class playground equipment from Turkey
- 3) Rizal Pavilion
- 4) Picnic Grove
- 5) Butterfly Garden
- 6) Lagoon Pavilion
- 7) New Pet Park
- 8) Chess Pavilion
- 9) Renovation of treasury office/cashier
- 10) Mushroom Modular Growing House which is a joint project of the Rizal Technological University (RTU) and the Department of Science and Technology (DOST)
- 11) General rehabilitation of plumbing/sanitary system
- 12) General rehabilitation of electrical system.

Sotto bared that the total project cost of the park's rehabilitation and improvement is P26.3 million.

Authored by Councilors Pao Santiago and Kiko Rustia, Ordinance No. 26, Series of 2023 declares the Maybunga Rainforest Park as a permanent rainforest park and green space, protecting the area from being destroyed or removed.

Previously known as the Rainforest Adventure Experience Park or RAVE Park, the Maybunga Rainforest Park hosts a variety of facilities and amenities for Pasigueños to enjoy and be in touch with nature.

These include an adventure park, an aMAZE garden, a boating lagoon, a botanical garden, a camping area, a fitness center, a flower park, a kiddie playland, a mini-zoo, a picnic grove, a promenade area, and an amphitheater.

Accreditation of street food vendors

Under the business and sanitation sector, Sotto announced the city's Sanitation Office's plan to accredit all street food vendors in the city.

"Magandang proyekto ho ito dahil una, lahat naman tayo eh kumakain ng street food paminsan minsan and pangalawa, hanapbuhay ito na maayos kaya hindi natin pwede sabihin or ayaw natin sabihin na 'o basta icomply ninyo tong lahat ng permit bahala na kayo'. Hindi naman maganda 'yun kaya tutulungan natin sila (This is a very good project because first of all, all of us are eating street food and secondly, this is a very honorable occupation hence, we cannot just demand street food vendors and owners to just blindly comply and secure permits by their own. The city government will help them get accredited)," Sotto explained.

"Ito pong accreditation natin kasama na ang inspection nung mga cart na makikita ng mga tao na ito ay accredited at sumusunod sa standards ng sanitation ng Lungsod Pasig, sigurado na malinis at safe. Maganda po dito ay libre or halos libre ito para sa mga street food vendors natin (This accreditation will include the provision and inspection of the carts so that people will see that the vendor is accredited and follows Pasig City's sanitation standards, ensuring them that all produce are clean and safe. Additionally, the accreditation and inspection are free or almost free for our street food vendors)," he added.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

DA-10 spearheads climate info caravan cum El Niño forum in Camiguin

The Department of Agriculture-Regional Field Office (DA-RFO)-10, through the Climate and Environment Risk Reduction Management Unit (CERRMU), conducted a Climate Information Caravan cum El Niño forum on February 6-7, in Camiguin province, to foster resilience and preparedness within communities vulnerable to the impacts of the climate phenomenon.

Per the report, the outlook for areas' potential for dry spells and drought conditions shows that Camiguin is likely to experience dry conditions by the end of February and is predicted to shift to drought conditions by the end of May 2024, based on the Department of Science and Technology's (DOST) PAGASA data.

Around 77 participants, coming from the different government sectors and some farmer-leaders of Camiguin, convened to learn valuable information on climate patterns and forecasts affecting the agricultural and fishery sectors of the province.

Camiguin is a farming and fishing province with a rich agricultural heritage and is known for its fertile volcanic soil, favorable climate, and diverse agricultural practices that primarily focus on the cultivation of crops such as rice, corn, coconut, various fruits and vegetables, and fisheries.

DA-10 Regional Executive Director Carlene C. Collado said the activity aims to provide invaluable insights, knowledge about climate conditions, and information on the El Niño phenomenon and its environmental impact.

Meanwhile, Camiguin Provincial Agriculturist Aida G. Chan conveyed her appreciation to everyone in attendance for their full cooperation at the event.

"I'm thankful to DA-10, especially to Dir. Collado, for granting our request to have this activity [Climate Info Car Cum El Niño Forum], as this would greatly help our sector leaders and farmers to better understand the effect of the El Niño phenomenon and its mitigation measures needed concerning the agricultural sector in our province," she said.

Significant to its role in providing information, DA-10 Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM) alternate focal person Gay Nanette M. Aleria added that the activity serves as a platform for raising awareness about the importance of climate

change adaptation and the need for collective action to address the challenges posed by El Niño.

The agency's top priorities were to put water management plans and other related actions into action, keep an eye on and work with PAGASA on climate forecasts, improve the DA-El Nino mitigation and action plan, boost production in areas that weren't at risk, and fix up areas that had been damaged.

Lastly, strengthen collaboration with local authorities, non-governmental organizations, and other stakeholders to address the anticipated changes in precipitation patterns during El Niño.

Also presented are the El Niño action plans of DOST PAGASA, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, the National Food Authority, Philippine Crop Insurance, Corp., and the National Irrigation Administration.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Maharlika Investment Corp. eyes investment in renewable energy](#)

By: Anna Leah Gonzales

The Maharlika Investment Corporation (MIC), which governs the Maharlika Investment Fund (MIF), will likely make its first investment in the renewable energy sector by the end of the year.

"I can only talk about sectors because we've got non-disclosure agreements with those who we're speaking with. So, we're aiming for... energy sector would be the first, I think. Then you've got infrastructure and agriculture," MIC president and chief executive officer (PCEO) Rafael Consing Jr. said during the sidelines of the Philippine Economic Outlook forum organized by the SGV Knowledge Institute on Monday.

Consing said energy security is one of the MIC's sectors of focus.

In particular, the MIC is focusing on renewable energy, new sources to diversify supply and create price stability, grid modernization, and electricity distribution.

"In my opinion, in terms of the amount we will commit for the year, I think a big portion of it really will be coming from energy," he said.

"Well, the reasons are quite obvious, right? I mean, you and I, we pay for very high electricity costs, right? And it takes a bit of time to build up that electricity," Consing added.

Consing said other sectors of focus include infrastructure, food security, aviation and aerospace, mineral processing, transportation and tourism.

The MIC serves as the sole vehicle responsible for mobilizing and utilizing the MIF for investments in transactions aimed at generating optimal returns on investments.

Consing said they are currently building the organization of the MIC.

"I've submitted the organizational structure to the GCG, or the Governance Commission for Government-Owned or Controlled Corporations. And then we've also been coordinating already with the Civil Service," he said.

"So quite a lot of steps. And at the same time, we're also building the pipeline. And I've also begun interviewing people already. So I'm really hoping that in the next month or two, we can gain better traction," he added.

RAPPLER

[\[Opinion\] Love in the time of the climate crisis](#)

By: John Leo C. Algo

'Green dating is also quickly catching on in the Philippines, as part of a singles community more conscious of values-centric dating'

We all have different definitions of love. For example, when I was a child, it was defined through a song as “something if you give it away.” As I grew older, I also heard that love was blind, patient, or sweeter the second time around. Or maybe a combination of all three.

Whatever your own definition is, one thing is for sure: life is much more meaningful when you have it, feel it, or are fighting for it. It is both pure and complicated, simple and dynamic all at once.

Regarding the romantic kind, many factors impact how we approach love. We account for personality, values, attractiveness, and resources, to name a few. Yet there is another emerging factor that is being considered more and more when it comes to romantic love: the climate crisis.

'Green dating'

During a recent speed dating event at a café in Quezon City, one of the café managers shared to me their experiences related to the climate crisis. Within the past five years, they had to install another air-conditioning unit and have their windows tinted to respond to an increasingly warmer environment, including for events like the one mentioned above.

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been an emergence of “green dating,” or the pursuit of romance with strong considerations for ecological consciousness and a shared desire for climate and environmental action.

Over the years, numerous reports show that a person’s perspectives and actions related to green issues are increasingly valued among singles seeking relationships. Dating apps such as Tinder and Bumble reported an increase in the mentions of climate-related issues on user profiles worldwide, with more people seeking dates that involve the outdoors or being physically active.

In Germany, the United Kingdom, and India, environmentalism is among the most popular causes indicated in the profiles of both new and existing Bumble users. A

similar trend is seen in Singapore, where 73% of singles expressed interest in living a sustainable lifestyle. Gen Z singles comprise 80% of Bumble users that also value environmentalism in the United States.

For other apps, veganism and vegetarianism were prominent in the profiles of many Tinder users in Brazil. Dating platform OkCupid saw a 368% increase in climate change or environment references in many of its user profiles within five years.

Green dating is also quickly catching on in the Philippines, as part of a singles community more conscious of values-centric dating. As of 2023, 48% of Bumble users give importance to the active engagement of their potential partner in social causes. Sustainability ranked second among the most-prioritized causes, seen in 73% of the app's users, behind human rights (84%) and political participation (72%); it should be noted that the latter two causes are also intricately linked to climate and environmental issues.

'Couples for Climate?'

A similar phenomenon can also be seen in many romantic couples regarding an increased concern for green issues. I have seen people in my social circle, married or in a relationship, take greater interest in environmental issues in recent years. They ask me what environmental organizations they can join to help, how their children can be taught eco-friendlier habits, or how to talk about this matter in case of differences of opinion.

How partners influence each other regarding the climate crisis was also the subject of a recent study by the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication. It found that partners having similar perspectives about the climate crisis does not necessarily mean a full alignment of the beliefs and behaviors between them. This emphasizes the need for couples to have more open communication with each other regarding their views and ideas on this issue, from misconceptions to preferred modes of action.

The climate crisis has different impacts on different scales, and the same can be said at the personal and interpersonal level. Some people can focus more on its environmental implications, like how it affects coral reefs or forests. Others may relate more to the economic impacts (i.e., how going eco-friendly would affect their budgets), political lens (i.e., a politician's green agenda compared to their reputation), or personal choices (i.e., choice of clothing or vacation spot).

Whatever the case may be, there is a higher chance of a person influencing their partner's views compared to a climate expert or famous communicator, given the level of familiarity, comfort, and trust that ideally exists between them. Climate conversations

at the household level are vital to making this issue even more grounded and understandable, which is critical for a nation like the Philippines that has a strong familial culture yet has low levels of properly comprehending the climate crisis.

Of course, being climate and environmentally-conscious is not the only factor when it comes to love, for singles searching for it or couples that have found it. Yet with the climate crisis potentially becoming worse over time without the much-needed ending of the fossil fuel era, it would increasingly influence how we view, express, and embody it in our words and actions, whether we are aware of it or not.

Nonetheless, there is one thing that loving someone and acting against the climate crisis have in common: we choose to commit to it for the sake of our future. It is my hope we make the right choice.

THE JAPAN TIMES

[Preparing for the hottest year Japan has ever seen](#)

By: Eric Margolis

A high of 38 degrees Celsius in Yamanashi Prefecture in July. A daily low of 31.4 C in Itoigawa, Niigata Prefecture, in August. A 27-degree day in Tokyo in November.

2023 was marked by intense, unrelenting heat across much of the world, including in Japan, where all-time temperature records seemed to fall weekly throughout the summer and well into autumn.

2024 may well end up worse.

Record February temperatures — including highs of between 18 and 20 C this past week across much of Japan, including northern areas — are a foreboding development in a year that experts say is likely to be the hottest in Japan's history.

While scientists cannot pinpoint exactly how much of the record-breaking temperatures can be attributed to various natural and human-made causes, global warming and the El Nino climate phenomenon are both major factors.

“Our prediction systems tell us that El Nino will lessen starting this spring and disappear by the end of summer,” says Takeshi Doi, a senior climate researcher at Japan Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC). “But the remaining energy of El Nino still needs to dissipate — all the heat that has built up (over the course of El Nino) is still there.”

The European Climate Monitor reported that new global temperature records were set every month between June 2023 and January 2024. In Japan, spring, summer and fall all brought above-average temperature anomalies of 1.6, 1.8 and 1.4 C across the nation, according to the Meteorological Agency.

Scientific projections suggest that the natural phenomenon of El Nino is going to dovetail with higher average temperatures under climate change this spring, resulting in everything from heavy, wet snow that can damage infrastructure to an unpredictable arrival for the country's signature cherry blossoms. Poor harvests and strained municipal budgets as cities in cooler regions race to install air conditioning units in public buildings could also result.

El Nino, a climate pattern where the equatorial Pacific Ocean becomes unusually warm, occurs every two to seven years. It typically brings higher water and surface

temperatures to Japan, and often exerts its biggest influence on the country's climate after it ends. That's because the remaining energy of El Nino dissipates in the Indian Ocean, which brings monsoons to Japan during the rainy season.

"The Indian Ocean will be hotter this spring and summer, which will stimulate the rainy season," explains Doi. "We need to be very careful about an unusually powerful rainy season and a warm spring, as the air heat effect will be at its peak this spring."

El Nino is a natural phenomenon. Although it can cause some unusually hot or rainy summers, it wouldn't be much of a concern if it wasn't coupled with climate change, Doi says.

"With global warming (and El Nino) in the background, incidental or random patterns can lead to major damage," he says. When the baseline is nearly 2 C higher — as the average temperatures in many Japanese localities were in 2023 compared with historical averages — an unusually hot or rainy day becomes a historically hot or rainy one.

Hokkaido not unscathed

These weather events played out from spring to winter over the last year, providing important warnings of what it might be like during potentially record-shattering heat in 2024.

Even Hokkaido couldn't escape the heat in 2023. Over the course of just one week of a scorching summer, the Yomiuri Shimbun reported that 935 people were hospitalized for heatstroke in the prefecture and over 125 schools were shut down on Aug. 24.

High temperatures across the prefecture led Sapporo Mayor Katsuhiko Akimoto to announce the installation of air conditioning units in hundreds of schools at the end of last summer. With an installation rate of just 16.5% as of this year, the city is attempting to take rapid action to prevent illness and death from heatstroke — but it will reportedly take until 2027 to complete all the installations.

However, rising energy costs and persistent poverty among Japan's elderly population and lower income households mean that having air conditioning installed doesn't guarantee that people will actually be protected from dangerously high temperatures. Takanori Fujita at Hotto Plus, a nonprofit that works with economically vulnerable populations, says that the single most frequent consultation that they received from clients last year was about not being able to use air conditioners.

“They can’t use their AC because of the cost, and they can’t go to the hospital to get treatment because of the cost,” Fujita says. “Twenty years ago when I started this work, we never received these consultations. And while the government provides energy subsidies and aid to repair and install air conditioning to those who need it, the people who are most in need of these subsidies don’t receive them.” Fujita explains that poor publicity and a lingering stigma around getting government support are the main causes.

“We even get consultations from hospitals asking what to do about people who collapsed from heatstroke and ended up hospitalized without any way to pay,” he says.

In snowy climes, warmer weather can pose its own dangers. Kazuki Nakamura at the government’s Snow and Ice Disaster Prevention Research Center explains that they have observed an increase in the distribution of heavy, wet snow over the last decade — the exact type of snow likely to cause infrastructural and natural disasters.

“Disasters caused by heavy, wet snow have increased in recent years, resulting in people getting trapped on roads, power outages due to falling trees and injuries from cleaning snowy roofs,” says Nakamura.

Warming temperatures haven’t affected all snowfall equally. While heavier snow continues to fall thick in the mountains, more southern and low-altitude snow tourism destinations have suffered the brunt of warming.

“We’ve heard from resort patrollers that ski resorts in Honshu are having a hard time opening due to lack of snow at the beginning of the season,” Nakamura reports.

Food sources at risk

Hotter temperatures have also posed strange and unpredictable risks to wildlife and agriculture.

Seaside localities around Japan have confirmed first-time residents in their waters: tropical bottlenose dolphins. Along with warmer water temperatures, these dolphins have migrated further north. After some dolphins died last year from injuries due to ship propellers, it’s clear that they also require newfound caution among fishers.

A representative from the Fisheries Technologies Center lab at Osaka Prefecture’s Research Institute of Environment says they have confirmed new species of dolphins and sperm whales are active in Osaka Bay, along with other more southerly fish species, such as the tenjikutachi (cardinalfish). After two consecutive years of whales dying and washing up on the local shore, activists and researchers are searching for answers for this increased activity.

The presence of new species in local waters is also raising questions for the fishing industry.

“As the species caught in Osaka Bay change significantly in the future, it could lead to different seafood being consumed around Osaka and the eventual loss of traditional food culture,” the representative says. While the lab hasn’t observed any direct impacts of El Nino, it has confirmed higher temperatures in the bay, and is concerned about the growing presence of toxic plankton from more southerly waters.

At the same time, local farmers and farming cooperatives are hurrying to try to prepare their crops for a summer of brutal temperatures. In Otsu, Shiga Prefecture, more than a month of days with temperatures of 35 C or higher had lasting effects on the city’s rice crops. High night temperatures caused a proliferation of cloudy white grains that failed to accumulate enough starch.

“Harvest volumes decreased by 10% to 20% among farmers who hadn’t implemented heat-resistance measures,” says Takayuki Tsukamoto from the prefecture’s Mirai Agriculture Promotion Division. “On top of that, the proportion of top-grade rice (among nonheat-resistant rice) fell from 54.3% to 43.5%.”

Tsukamoto adds that soybean crops were also negatively affected.

Declines in harvest yields threaten local specialties as well, such as the “Zunda mochi” in Kakuda, Miyagi Prefecture, which is made with a special variety of green beans. The Green Five Edano agricultural cooperative reported losing more than half of these pods before they could even harvest this past year due to the heat.

Scientific solutions

But those affected the most by the heat aren’t taking it lying down.

Nakamura says his division is at work in ski resort boomtown Niseko conducting research to prevent avalanches and quantify the quality of powder snow to help ski resorts adapt.

On the coast, given severe seaweed shortages caused by higher water temperatures, the Fisheries Technology Center is researching seaweed strains that are more heat resistant. They’re also working on methods to detect the more southern toxic sea plankton species.

Meanwhile, Shiga Prefecture is heavily promoting their new kiramizuki white rice strain, which is organic, heat-resistant, less vulnerable to typhoon winds and rains, gentle on the soil and yields nearly 90% top-grade rice to boot.

“There was some resistance to the new strain at first, but because of how good it is for the environment, a number of farmers have embraced it,” Tsukamoto says.

The rice, typically only available in Shiga, made its Tokyo debut at Ginza’s Mitsukoshi department store earlier this month.

'Double-punch'

Forecasting this year's weather in light of global warming and El Nino is proving to be a difficult task. Data from Berkeley Earth suggests that human-caused global warming, the El Nino cycle, the solar cycle, 2022's Hunga Tonga eruption and reduction in marine fuel pollution have all contributed on various levels to the rising temperatures of the last decade.

"Even El Nino — the usual suspect behind record warm years — does not clearly explain 2023 temperatures," writes Zeke Hausfather for The Climate Brink. "2023 was so exceptionally warm that it suggests that this El Nino might be behaving differently."

Still, a coalition of major climate models all forecast 2024 as more likely than not to be warmer than 2023.

But Hausfather and others emphasize that individual years aren't as important as the long-term upward trend in temperatures driven by greenhouse gas emissions.

“So long as the CO2 emissions do not stop, we can assume the summer heat will continue to increase,” Doi says. “This year, the various stresses of climate change will create a double-punch along with El Nino and when natural change layers on top of the rising temperature, it can feel quite extreme.”

THE MANILA TIMES

Climate resilience PH priority, UN told

By: Bernadette E. Tamayo

Climate resilience and food security are the key development priorities of the country, Philippine Permanent Representative to the United Nations Antonio Lagdameo informed the UN Security Council, the Department of Foreign Affairs said.

Lagdameo, during open debates, said that the Philippines has adopted the National Climate Change Action Plan, which prioritizes food security, water sufficiency, ecological and environmental stability, among others, as the country's strategic direction to 2028.

"The Philippines is a living testament to the harsh realities of climate change," the ambassador said.

"We have faced and continue to face the wrath of devastating typhoons, rising sea levels, and the perilous threats posed to our biodiversity and ecosystems, agriculture, food security and livelihoods," Lagdameo said. "These realities compel us to take bold and decisive actions, rooted in equity and our firm commitment to global rules-based order and multilateralism."

He stressed the need for countries to comply with "agreements and commitments made within the context of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and its Paris Agreement are complied with and climate justice ensured."

"The meeting aimed to promote enhanced understanding, more coordinated responses, and proactive approaches to addressing the linkages between food insecurity and climate change in a peace and security context," the DFA wrote on X (formerly Twitter).

Guyanese President Mohamed Irfaan Ali led the meeting, along with UN Secretary-General António Guterres, UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell, Deputy Director-General of the Food and Agricultural Organization Beth Bechdol, and Director of Global Initiatives and Head of Peace, Climate, and Sustainable Development of the International Peace Institute Jimena Leiva Roesch.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[\[Opinion\] The folly of waste-to-energy](#)

By: Charlie V. Manalo

Proponents hail waste to energy (WTE) as a hitting-two-birds-with-one-stone solution to runaway trash and energy pollution.

So, they believe incinerating solid waste to fuel electricity generators is the future of waste management and clean energy.

A proposed legislative measure that would institutionalize WTE is already pending in the Senate. It, however, overlooks other much cleaner waste management technologies, which evidence suggests is a much safer, cleaner way to convert garbage dumps into a repository of fuel sources.

Jump-starting the industry, however, would take more than just a law. Instead, it requires an entirely different system, one that would spur a paradigm shift in mindsets and ways of life. In short, a game changer.

The law must straighten the maze of bureaucracy that involves at least three government departments — the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Energy, and the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

The DENR is there because the system involves waste and the WTF industry's impact on the environment in the process of turning waste into fuel for power generation.

The DoE is involved because the system is centered on the industry's main product — electricity.

The DILG is in the loop, too, because it is supposed to oversee the waste management operations of local governments from where the raw material for fuel, garbage, will emanate.

What some lawmakers conveniently forget to say is that there is no other currently available method to produce electricity directly from waste other than to burn everything flammable that is collected from the garbage pile.

Plastics, food waste, textiles, rubber, PVCs, polyurethane, you name it. With or without effective segregation, these materials are toxic.

Without segregation, aka the Philippine waste system, these materials can kill.

A number of studies have been made on the viability of direct waste to energy. Most are lengthy, but we can take a shorter route, at the risk of being accused of cherry-picking, and take a look at what the environmental group Friends of the Earth said about using burning waste to produce electricity.

"There is insufficient evidence to conclude that any incinerator is safe," said the group's Melbourne office in an online report. Translation: Incinerators suck.

"Community groups have a basis for legitimate concern," it said. Translation: Be afraid, be very afraid.

The group further notes that WTE was likely to miss the target if its aim was to reduce the volume of waste being dumped in landfills and open dumps.

"Burning the waste doesn't cause it to disappear," the group said, adding that 15 to 25 percent of the waste thrown in incinerators "remains as ash in the end." Translation: Burning waste produces a different but more toxic trash.

"The incineration process produces highly toxic filter cake, which will need to be disposed of in hazardous waste landfills," said Friends of the Earth. Translation: You don't only spend on incinerators; you spend more on keeping its byproducts from poisoning people.

Multiple scientific studies have presented findings leading to the conclusion that something as basic as simply breathing could shorten your life.

Though in minute amounts, the air we breathe, because of pollution, is laden with some of the most toxic substances on Earth — arsenic, lead, mercury, and a host of other chemicals that could complete chemistry's periodic table.

While in very minuscule amounts, these poisonous chemicals will build up in the human body and act like slow poison.

Add to these the poison that incinerating wastes will release into the air. We should really be afraid, very afraid.

And we can helplessly just watch as new forms of waste, a more toxic one, are added to our garbage pile.

He really knows what he's doing.

Of all the service providers for car paint protection — film and ceramic coating — I believe Charles Bien Villaluz, owner of The After Polish – Paint Protection Film, Coating and Detailing Services, really stands out from the rest.

Aside from being a hands-on owner and chief detailer of The After Polish, he doesn't have any qualms about making those lengthy and detailed explanations regarding the service he's going to provide, how it should be carried out, why some coating cannot be employed on some parts and phases of the service as opposed to the promotional offers of other companies providing the same kind of service.

No wonder he's trusted by a number of celebrities and even politicians seeking such kinds of services.

Don't take my word for it. Take his — literally. He knows exactly every inch of what is needed to know in the industry — the very key to the satisfactory service he provides.

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