



NEWS ROUNDUP

28 MARCH 2025 [08:00 am]

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By: Mariel Celine Serquiña

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UN NEWS

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

GMA NEWS

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By: Mariel Celine Serquiña

A “danger level” heat index is expected in 7 areas in the country on Friday, PAGASA said in its latest advisory.

A heat index between 42 to 51 °C falls under the "danger" classification, posing health risks such as heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke with continuing activity.

Based on its 5 p.m. March 26 bulletin, the state weather bureau said Dagupan City, Pangasinan is expected to experience a 46 °C heat index while General Santos City, South Cotabato could reach up to 43 °C.

Meanwhile, the following areas could reach up to 42°C heat:

- Aparri, Cagayan
- Tuguegarao City, Cagayan
- Cubi Point, Subic Bay, Olongapo City
- Sangley Point, Cavite City
- Cuyo, Palawan

The heat index measures how hot it feels to the human body, factoring in humidity along with the actual air temperature.

In Metro Manila, NAIA Pasay City will have a heat index of 40°C, while Science Garden in Quezon City will be facing a heat index of 39°C.

A heat index from 33°C to 41°C is under the “extreme caution” category, where heat cramps and heat exhaustion are possible, and continuing activity could lead to heat stroke.

The heat index measures how hot it feels to the human body, factoring in humidity along with the actual air temperature.

Earlier today, PAGASA said up to 50°C heat index may hit some parts of the country during the dry season this year, which began on Wednesday.

According to PAGASA assistant weather services chief Chris Perez, the highest heat index may be felt around April or May.

He added that hotter days are expected in the country even at night with the start of the dry season.

PH logs 1.3 million hours for global 'Earth Hour Bank'

The Philippines set a new record in the global Earth Hour Bank, contributing an unprecedented 1.3 million hours of positive action for the planet.

The milestone, achieved during WWF-Philippines' Earth Hour celebration, underscores the growing environmental awareness and calls for stronger climate action among Filipinos.

According to Earth Hour Philippines national director Atty. Angela Consuelo Ibay, the overwhelming participation showcased the Filipino people's desire for a healthier, more sustainable environment.

"Filipinos want breathable air, cooler weather, clean water, healthy forests and ecosystems, and more renewable energy. This is the strong message they sent when they joined the global switch-off of Earth Hour. It is a clear sign that leaders and officials should do more for the environment and our planet," said Ibay, who also heads WWF-Philippines' Climate and Energy Programme.

Data collected through the EarthHour.org website, where individuals self-reported their hours of participation, placed the Philippines at the top of the global rankings with 1,377,368 hours. China followed with 783,674 hours, while India logged 359,652 hours.

In total, Earth Hour 2025 recorded 2,925,040 hours from 118 countries and territories, emphasizing a worldwide commitment to environmental and climate action.

The Earth Hour Bank allows individuals to log time spent engaging in eco-friendly activities such as coastal cleanups, zero-waste cooking, tree planting, watching nature documentaries, environmental education, and even acoustic music sessions to reduce energy consumption.

The massive participation from the Philippines marks an over 1000% increase from the 116,273 hours recorded in 2024, signifying a dramatic surge in climate awareness and engagement.

Government agencies, local governments, and corporations played a crucial role in supporting Earth Hour 2025. A total of 28 partners, including national government offices, participated by organizing switch-off activities in various localities and establishments.

The Department of Energy (DOE) reported a significant increase in energy savings during this year's Earth Hour. The 1-hour lights-off from 8:30 PM to 9:30 PM led to a

grid load drop of 161.98 megawatts (MW), surpassing the 132.11 MW reduction recorded in 2024.

Since its inception in 2007, Earth Hour has evolved from a symbolic lights-off movement into a larger global initiative advocating societal, cultural, and political changes to combat climate change.

"Our country has been consistently the top-ranked nation in the world in terms of disaster risk. It is about time that Filipinos demand concrete actions, not just promises, from leaders to put measures in place that will protect people from the adverse effects of climate change," Ibay said..

This year's Earth Hour was celebrated under the theme "Switch Off and Secure Water for All," highlighting the critical issue of water security and its connection to climate change. WWF-Philippines spearheaded activities across various cities, amplifying awareness and participation to drive meaningful action towards environmental sustainability.

PALAWAN NEWS

[PH leads global Earth Hour Bank with record-breaking 1.3M hours](#)

A record-breaking Earth Hour: Filipinos lead the charge globally with 1.3M hours for the planet, cutting 161.98 MW from the grid and uniting 44 institutions in a powerful stand for Earth.

Filipinos, in a collective effort, dedicated over 1.3 million hours doing something positive for planet Earth as part of the annual Earth Hour celebration led by WWF-Philippines. This remarkable feat is a testament to the Filipino spirit and their demand for concrete actions to protect the environment, according to Earth Hour Philippines National Director, Atty. Angela Consuelo Ibay.

Data collated on the EarthHour.org website through self-reporting of individuals showed Philippines had 1,377,368 hours, while China had 783,674 hours and India had 359,652 hours. The global celebration of Earth Hour in 2025 collected a total of 2,925,040 hours from 118 countries and territories, underscoring the collective effort towards environmental and climate action.

“Filipinos want breathable air, cooler weather, clean water, healthy forests and ecosystems, and more renewable energy. This is the strong message they sent when they joined the global switch-off of Earth Hour. A clear sign that leaders and officials should do more for the environment and our planet,” Atty. Ibay, who also serves as WWF-Philippines Climate and Energy Programme Head, said.

“The growth of this global grassroots movement has been phenomenal, especially here in the Philippines, where we have achieved our highest number of hours this 2025,” she added.

THE JAPAN TIMES

[Recent spate of wildfires in Japan and South Korea linked to climate change](#)

By: Tomoko Otake

A series of wildfires that broke out in Japan and South Korea last week were fueled by human-induced climate change, according to a new rapid analysis released by a group of European researchers.

ClimaMeter, a European Union-backed project studying the impact of climate change on extreme weather, said the ongoing wildfires in both countries were made more intense due to persistently dry soil, strong winds and unusually high temperatures.

The wildfires erupted between Friday and Sunday and are still raging in Okayama and Ehime prefectures in Japan, as well as in parts of South Korea.

Meanwhile, a new wildfire detected in the city of Miyazaki around noon on Tuesday continued to spread on Wednesday despite efforts by local firefighters and Self-Defense Forces to tame the blaze. The fire had razed 50 hectares as of Wednesday morning and at least 70 households in the city have been told to evacuate.

Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba on Wednesday issued an order to ministers and relevant authorities to maximize efforts to put out the fires, support residents' safe evacuations and get trucks mounted with electric generators ready in case of large-scale power outages.

In the European study, researchers compared patterns of the atmospheric pressure system of 1987-2023 with those of the 1950-1986 period, when they were less affected by climate change. The results showed that the weather in the latest period was warmer by up to 2 degrees Celsius, precipitation was down by up to 2 millimeters per day and winds were stronger by up to 4.8 kph.

The wildfires in the past week follow the nation's worst wildfire in half a century, which broke out in Ofunato, Iwate Prefecture in February, right on the heels of record snowfall observed the same month in eastern and northern Japan.

"In weeks, the region saw record snowfall and the worst fire in decades," said Davide Faranda, a researcher at the French National Centre for Scientific Research, who was involved in the study.

"Climate change isn't just warming the planet, it is amplifying extremes of different nature, fueling disasters from both fire and ice in the region."

Carmen Alvarez Castro, a researcher at the University Pablo de Olavide in Spain who was also involved in the study, concurred.

“The wildfires in eastern Asia in March 2025, strengthened by human-driven climate change, underscore the increasing frequency and severity of extreme weather events, stressing the urgent need to tackle the rising impacts of climate change,” she said.

In their analysis, the researchers factored in different natural phenomena such as El Nino and concluded that, while some of these changes can be caused by natural variability, the contribution of human-driven climate change was undeniable.

While an average of 1,300 wildfires strike Japan every year, this year has seen a spate of events that are much worse than most. In addition to the Ofunato wildfire, which razed 2,900 hectares of vegetation, a forest fire in Imabari, Ehime Prefecture continues to rage at the time of writing, having spread some 300 hectares. The city has ordered a total of 3,800 households to evacuate from their homes.

Firefighting efforts were also ongoing in the city of Okayama, where 546 hectares had been burnt down as of 2 p.m. Wednesday.

THE MANILA TIMES

Warm, humid weather affecting Metro Manila, rest of PH

By: Arlie O. Calalo

The easterlies, winds coming from the east and passing through the Pacific Ocean that carry warm and humid weather, would be experienced over Metro Manila and the rest of the country within 24 hours, the state weather agency said on Tuesday.

Weather forecaster Chenel Dominguez of the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said it has not monitored any tropical cyclones within the archipelago's area of responsibility, and weather disturbance is not expected to form in the coming days.

Meanwhile, she said the northeast monsoon locally known as 'amihan' is already on its weakening form as it only affects Ilocos Region, Cordillera Administrative Region and Cagayan Valley where isolated light rains would be likely.

The easterly winds have been prevailing in many areas of the country including Bicol Region, Western Visayas, Northern Samar, Eastern Samar, Samar, Romblon and Palawan, according to the national weather bureau.

The other weather system -- intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ), an imaginary line where winds from the northern and southern hemispheres meet -- would be bringing scattered rains and thunderstorms over Davao Region and Zamboanga Peninsula.

It would also affect SOCCSKSARGEN (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos) and BARMM (Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao) where overcast skies would prevail, Pagasa's 5 a.m. advisory said.

UN NEWS

[Is climate science the next power source for renewable energy?](#)

By: Laura Quinones

The race toward renewable energy is accelerating. And for all the looming challenges of the climate crisis, signs of progress are clear: Solar panels are beginning to blanket deserts, wind turbines dot coastlines, and hydropower dams are harnessing powerful rivers to generate electricity without the carbon pollution that has made fossil fuels the single largest driver of global warming.

In fact, new data from the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) shows that global renewable capacity grew by a record 585 gigawatts in 2024, representing over 90 percent of all new power added worldwide, and the fastest annual growth rate in two decades.

Yet, as the push for renewables gains momentum—fueled by falling costs and the urgent need to phase out oil, gas, and coal—experts are warning that climate change, largely caused by decades of fossil fuel combustion, is now increasingly shaping—and in some cases, threatening—the way clean energy is produced.

This trend became more pronounced in 2023, marked by a volatility that disrupted renewable energy generation globally. Temperatures soared 1.45°C above pre-industrial levels, and the shift from La Niña to El Niño altered rainfall, wind patterns, and solar radiation.

Hamid Bastani, a climate and energy expert with the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), provided a stark example of this impact. “In Sudan and Namibia, hydropower output dropped by more than 50 per cent due to unusually low rainfall,” he said in an interview with UN News.

In Sudan, rainfall totaled just 100 millimeters (less than four inches) in 2023—less than half the national long-term average.

“This is a country where hydropower makes up around 60 per cent of the electricity mix. These reductions could have significant implications,” Mr. Bastani explained, noting that the power system supports a large and rapidly growing population of about 48 million.

These shifts were not limited to hydropower. Wind energy, too, showed signs of stress under changing climate conditions.

China, which accounts for 40 per cent of global onshore wind capacity, saw only a modest 4 to 8 per cent increase in output in 2023, as wind anomalies disrupted generation. In India, production declined amid weaker monsoon winds, while some regions in Africa experienced even sharper losses, with wind output falling by as much as 20 to 30 per cent.

South America, meanwhile, saw the scale tip in the other direction. Clear skies and elevated solar radiation boosted solar panel performance, particularly in countries like Brazil, Colombia, and Bolivia.

As such, the region saw a four to six per cent increase in solar generation – a climate-driven bump that translated to roughly three terawatt-hours of additional electricity, enough to power over two million homes for a year at average consumption rates.

“This is a good example of how climate variability can sometimes create opportunity,” explains Roberta Boscolo, who leads WMO’s New York Office and formerly the agency’s climate and energy work. “In Europe, too, we are seeing more days with high solar radiation, meaning solar power is becoming more efficient over time.”

Ms. Boscolo and Mr. Bastani are among the contributors to a recent WMO–IRENA study examining how climate conditions in 2023, shaped by El Niño, global warming, and regional extremes, affected both renewable energy generation and energy demand worldwide.

Systems built on stability, in a world that is anything but
Ms. Boscolo, who has spent years working at the intersection of climate science and energy policy, is quick to point out the vulnerability of renewable energy infrastructure. Dams, solar farms, and wind turbines are all designed based on past climate patterns, making them susceptible to the changing climate.

Take hydropower. Dams rely on predictable seasonal flows, often fed by snowmelt or glacial runoff. “There will be a short-term boost in hydropower as glaciers melt,” she said. “But once those glaciers are gone, so is the water. And that is irreversible – at least on human timescales.”

This pattern is already unfolding in regions like the Andes and the Himalayas. If the meltwater disappears, countries will need to replace the way they generate power or face long-term energy deficits.

A recent report from the UN Environment Programme (UNEP), for example, pointed out that rising sea levels and stronger storms pose growing risks to energy production facilities, including solar farms located near coastlines.

Similarly, increasingly intense and frequent wildfires can also take down power lines and black out entire regions, while extreme heat can reduce the efficiency of solar panels and strain grid infrastructure—just as demand for cooling peaks.

Nuclear power plants are also at risk in the changing climate.

“We have seen nuclear power plants that could not operate because of the lack of water... for cooling,” Ms. Boscolo said. As heatwaves become more frequent and river

levels drop, some older nuclear facilities may no longer be viable in their current locations.

“This is another thing that should be looked at with different eyes in the future . When we design, when we build, when we project power generation infrastructure, we really need to think about what the climate of the future will be, not what was the climate of the past”.

Adapting to the future through data, AI and technology

The expert underscores that one thing is certain: Our planet is heading towards a future in which electricity, especially from renewable sources, will be central.

“Our transport is going to be electric; our cooking is going to be electric; our heating is going to be electric. So, if we do not have a reliable electricity system, everything is going to collapse. We will need to have this climate intelligence when we think about how to change our energy systems and the reliability and the resilience of our energy system in the future.”

Indeed, to adapt, both experts emphasized a need to embrace what they call climate intelligence – the integration of climate forecasts, data, and science into every level of energy planning.

“In the past, energy planners worked with historical averages,” Mr. Bastani explained. “But the past is no longer a reliable guide. We need to know what the wind will be doing next season, what rainfall will look like next year – not just what it looked like a decade ago.”

In Chile, for instance, hydropower generation surged by as much as 80 per cent in November 2023, due to unusually high rainfall. While this increase was climate-driven, experts say advanced seasonal forecasting could help dam operators better anticipate such events in the future and manage reservoirs to store water more effectively.

Similarly, wind farm workers can use forecasts to schedule maintenance during low-wind periods – minimizing downtime and avoiding losses. Grid operators, too, can plan for energy spikes during heatwaves or droughts.

“We now have forecasts that span from a few seconds ahead to several months,” Mr. Bastani said. “Each one has a specific application – from immediate grid balancing to long-term investment decisions.”

Artificial intelligence (AI) is lending a hand: Machine learning models trained on climate and energy data can now predict resource fluctuations with higher resolution and accuracy. These tools could help optimize when to deploy battery storage or shift energy between regions, making the system more flexible and responsive.

“These models can help operators better anticipate fluctuations in wind, rainfall, or solar radiation”, Mr. Bastain explained.

For example, two recent WMO energy mini projects illustrated how artificial intelligence can be applied in real-world renewable energy planning. In Costa Rica, the agency worked with national energy authorities to develop and implement an AI-based model for short-term wind speed forecasting. The tool is now integrated into the Costa Rican Electricity Institute’s internal energy forecasting platform, helping optimize operations at selected wind farms.

In Chile, another project focused on floating solar technology, using AI to estimate evaporation rates on reservoirs. The results, now incorporated into Chile’s official Solar Energy Explorer platform, showed that floating solar panels can reduce water evaporation by up to 85 per cent in summer, with a national average of 77 per cent.

Indeed, the promise and challenge of climate-smart renewable planning are most evident in the Global South. Africa, for instance, boasts some of the best solar potential on the planet, yet only two per cent of the world's installed renewable capacity is found on the continent.

Why the gap? Ms. Boscolo points to a lack of data and investment.

“In many parts of the Global South, there just is not enough observational data to create accurate forecasts or make energy projects bankable,” she said. “Investors need to see reliable long-term projections. Without that, the risk is too high.”

WMO is working to improve weather and energy monitoring in underserved regions, but progress is uneven. The agency is calling for more funding for local data networks, cross-border energy planning, and climate services tailored to regional needs.

“This is not just about climate mitigation,” Ms. Boscolo added. “It is a development opportunity. Renewable energy can bring electricity to communities, drive industrial growth, and create jobs if the systems are designed right.”

Mr. Bastani sees a need for global data sharing between energy companies and climate scientists.

“There is a huge untapped potential in the data collected by the private sector... integrating historical and real-time observations from power plants – solar, wind, hydropower, even nuclear – can significantly improve weather and climate models. This is a win-win.”

Diversifying the energy portfolio to adapt

Another key action to guarantee clean energy in the near future is diversification. Relying too heavily on only one renewable source can expose countries to seasonal or long-term shifts in climate, Mr. Bastani explains.

In Europe, for example, energy planners are increasingly concerned about something called “dunkelflaute”— a period of cloudy, windless weather in winter that undermines both solar power and wind generation. This phenomenon, linked to high-pressure systems known as anticyclonic gloom, has prompted calls for more energy storage and backup power.

“A diversified mix that includes solar, wind, hydro, battery storage, and even low-carbon sources (like geothermal) is essential,” Mr. Bastani said. “Especially as extreme weather becomes more frequent.”

Into the future

As the world races towards a future powered by renewable energy, addressing the challenges posed by climate change is imperative. The volatility experienced in 2023 underscores the need for climate-smart planning and infrastructure that can withstand unpredictable shifts in weather patterns.

For renewable energy to truly fulfill its promise, the world must invest not only in expanding capacity but also in building a system that is resilient, adaptable, and informed by the best available climate science.

WMO experts Hamid Bastani and Roberta Boscolo emphasize the importance of integrating climate intelligence into energy systems to ensure their reliability and resilience. By leveraging advanced forecasting and artificial intelligence, we can better anticipate and adapt to these changes, optimizing renewable energy production and safeguarding our future.

The future of energy is not just about more wind turbines and solar panels, but also about ensuring they can withstand the very forces they are meant to mitigate.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

BUSINESS MIRROR

[Be climate gamechanger, Borje tells private sector](#)

By: Bless Aubrey Ogerio

Climate resilience needs bold moves, and the private sector should be on the frontlines to lead the charge, a climate advocate reiterated on Monday.

At the second State of Climate Change forum, Climate Change Commission (CCC) Secretary Robert Borje called on the private entities to step up and help build a climate-resilient future.

“Preventing losses and damages starts with turning our adaptation plans into tangible solutions, with the private sector stepping up as a driving force in building a climate-resilient future,” Borje said in his keynote address at the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation-led [PDRF] event at Makati Diamond Residences.

Businesses are uniquely positioned to make a significant impact, said San Miguel Corporation Foundation chairperson Cecile Ang.

“By investing in sustainable practices and supporting community resilience, businesses can help secure a safer, more sustainable future for everyone,” she said during the panel discussion.

For its part, the CCC continues to push for the localization of the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and updating the country’s Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC), which serve as key frameworks for strengthening climate resilience and sustainable development.

The forum, themed “Advancing Private Sector Engagement and the National Adaptation Plan,” was held in partnership with the New Zealand Embassy, a supporter of the Philippines’ climate resilience efforts.

“Through cooperation and innovation, we can create solutions that not only protect communities but also drive economic growth and investment,” New Zealand ambassador Stuart Horne said.

In November, the Philippines and New Zealand signed a Joint Declaration on Climate Change Cooperation, which outlines an 18-month plan to strengthen collaboration mostly on innovation, sustainable development and economic growth.

Data from the Asia Development Bank showed that nearly all climate finance flows in the Asia-Pacific from 2018 to 2019, with 91 percent aimed at mitigation, while 36 percent of the contributions came from private sector entities.

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