



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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#### [Hot and dry weekend ahead as ridge of high pressure area, Easterlies prevail](#)

By: Ariel Rojas

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### BOMBO RADYO

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By: John Flores

Iminungkahi ng Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) ang bagong patakaran upang hikayatin ang mga bangko na magpautang para sa eco-friendly o climate-resilient na pabahay.

## **ECO BUSINESS**

### [Climate Impact Innovations Challenge back with US\\$885,000 prize pool, new partner](#)

The Climate Impact Innovations Challenge (CIIC) returns for its fourth edition with a boosted prize pool of Rp15 billion (US\$885,000) – up by Rp5 billion (US\$295,000).

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### [Iran war puts focus on petrochemicals used in numerous products and a driver of climate change](#)

The Iran war has exposed deep vulnerability in the global economy: dependence not just on oil, gas and coal for fuel, but on petrochemicals that underpin everything from food production to plastic packaging.

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The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are mobilizing USD25 million worth of financing to accelerate ASEAN Power Grid investments and support access to reliable power supply in the region.

## **THE BUSINESS TIMES**

### [Regulation can bolster Asean's food and energy resilience](#)

By: Duke Hipp

WHILE the world holds its collective breath in the wake of the provisional ceasefire in Iran, the conflict and developments at the Strait of Hormuz have painfully illustrated the interconnection between energy and food.

## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **[Greenpeace slams govt's fossil fuel push](#)**

By: Leander C. Domingo

The Philippines is at a crossroads. Its government is pushing for more oil and gas exploration in protected areas even as the country grapples with the impacts of climate change.

## **THE NEW YORK TIMES**

### **[Northeast States Set Big Climate Goals. Now Those Plans Are in Trouble.](#)**

By: Brad Plumer

Several years ago, in a burst of climate optimism, Democratic-led states across the Northeast adopted some of the world's most ambitious policies to shift away from fossil fuels and cut planet-warming emissions.

## **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

## **DAILY TRIBUNE**

### **[The cost of energy dependence and the discipline to break it](#)**

By: Secretary Robert EA Borje

IEvery time conflict breaks out in the Middle East, it finds its way into Filipino homes. Not through headlines but through higher electricity bills, transport costs and more expensive food.

## **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

### **[CCC warns of 'danger' heat index levels in several areas](#)**

By: Marita Moaje

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Friday called on the public to take extra precautions as heat index levels in several parts of the country have reached the "danger" category during the peak of the summer season.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

**ABS CBN**

**Hot and dry weekend ahead as ridge of high pressure area, Easterlies prevail**

By: Ariel Rojas

Many parts of the Philippines will experience hot and dry weather this weekend, April 11 and 12, PAGASA said Friday.

In its weekly weather outlook, the weather bureau said the ridge or extension of a high pressure area will affect Ilocos Region, Cordillera Administrative Region, Cagayan Valley, and most parts of Central Luzon.

Fair weather prevails in areas affected by a high pressure area as cloud formation is inhibited by downward or sinking movement of air.

The rest of the country, including Metro Manila, will also experience sunny and humid conditions.

However, afternoon showers or thunderstorms are likely, especially over the eastern sections of Visayas and Mindanao due to the Easterlies, the warm winds blowing from the Pacific.

This Friday, PAGASA said four areas may experience dangerous heat index level of 42°C: Catarman, Northern Samar; Cotabato City; Dumangas, Iloilo; and Zamboanga City. Heat cramps and heat exhaustion are possible in this condition while prolonged exposure may result in heat stroke.

**'SINLAKU' MAY OR MAY NOT ENTER PAR**

The weather bureau also continues to monitor Tropical Storm Sinlaku outside the Philippine area of responsibility.

At 8 a.m. Friday, it was located 2,730 kilometers east of northeastern Mindanao.

It slightly intensified, now packing winds of 75 kilometers per hour and with gustiness up to 90 kph. It is moving south southwestward at 10 kph.

PAGASA said the storm could enter or just pass near the eastern boundary of the PAR before weekend next week.

If it enters PAR, it will be assigned the local name Caloy, the third tropical cyclone in the country this 2026 and the first this month.

The weather disturbance is not seen to make a landfall over any part of the Philippine landmass and is also not expected to directly impact the country's weather.

## **BOMBO RADYO**

### **[BSP, nais ibaba ang risk weight ng sustainable housing loans para palakasin ang climate resilience](#)**

By: John Flores

Iminungkahi ng Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) ang bagong patakaran upang hikayatin ang mga bangko na magpautang para sa eco-friendly o climate-resilient na pabahay.

Sa ilalim ng draft circular, bababaan ang “credit risk weight” ng sustainable housing loans mula 50% hanggang 20%. West Philippine Sea

Ibig sabihin, mas kaunting pondo ang kailangang itabi ng mga bangko kapag nagpapautang para sa ganitong uri ng bahay—kaya mas maeengganyo silang pondohan ito.

Layunin ng BSP na palakasin ang kakayahan ng bansa na makasabay sa epekto ng climate change, lalo na’t madalas tamaan ang Pilipinas ng baha, bagyo, at matinding init.

Ayon sa BSP, kakaunti pa lamang ang sustainable housing projects sa bansa, kaya kailangan ng ganitong hakbang upang mapalago ang lokal na merkado. Bahagi rin ito ng pagtupad ng Pilipinas sa mga pangako nito sa ilalim ng Paris Agreement.

Para makuha ang benepisyo, dapat ang bahay ay may mga “green” features tulad ng:

- energy-efficient design
- water conservation systems
- proteksyon laban sa baha (hal. elevated floors, maayos na drainage)
- paggamit ng renewable energy tulad ng solar panels

Sa kabuuan, inaasahang makakatulong ang panukalang ito para dumami ang climate-resilient homes at mahikayat ang mas maraming Pilipino at developer na mag-invest sa mas ligtas at sustainable na pabahay.

## ECO BUSINESS

### [Climate Impact Innovations Challenge back with US\\$885,000 prize pool, new partner](#)

The Climate Impact Innovations Challenge (CIIC) returns for its fourth edition with a boosted prize pool of Rp15 billion (US\$885,000) – up by Rp5 billion (US\$295,000).

Presented by East Ventures, a pioneering and leading sector-agnostic venture capital firm that has supported over 300 tech companies across Southeast Asia, Temasek Foundation, a Singapore-based philanthropic organisation that supports sustainable development initiatives in Asia, and the addition of Tencent as a new presenting partner, a global technology leader recognised for developing innovative products and services that connect people and empower industries worldwide, CIIC continues to strengthen its position as Indonesia's largest climate tech innovations competition.

This year, CIIC 2026 is committed to offering a special award of pre-purchase carbon credits worth up to US\$1 million to the selected finalists, supporting the development and deployment of impactful climate solutions. These solutions aim to address pressing ecological challenges and help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

“We are honoured to once again present CIIC 2026, which reflects our strong belief that technology and entrepreneurship are powerful drivers of climate solutions. Over the years, CIIC has become a platform that empowers innovators to transform bold ideas into scalable solutions addressing Indonesia's most pressing environmental challenges. By bringing together founders, investors, and ecosystem partners, we aim to accelerate the development and adoption of climate technologies that can create meaningful and lasting impacts,” said Avina Sugiarto, Partner at East Ventures.

“The Climate Impact Innovations Challenge has, over the years, grown in a powerful and catalytic platform driving real-world sustainability innovations in Indonesia and across Asia. This year, we are scaling our ambition with a larger prize pool and stronger support to accelerate this journey. Temasek Foundation is proud to partner East Ventures once again and to welcome Tencent on board – together, we aim to help more innovators turn bold ideas into meaningful impact for People and the Planet,” said Heng Li Lang, Head, Climate & Liveability, Temasek Foundation.

“At Tencent, we are committed to driving lasting, positive change by using technology as a force for good. We are proud to collaborate with East Ventures and Temasek Foundation on CIIC 2026 to advance climate innovation and scale high-potential solutions across markets. Together, we aim to nurture a more resilient and forward-looking climate innovation ecosystem benefiting communities. We look forward to empowering the next generation of innovators through the partnerships this platform will forge,” said Dr Xu Hao, Vice President of Sustainable Social Value, Tencent.

This year, CIIC 2026 focuses on three tracks, which include:

**Energy Transition:** Innovative solutions that promote renewable energy adoption, sustainable mobility systems, and efficient resource use. The goal is to enable inclusive, cost-effective energy transitions that benefit communities and industries.

**Food & Nature Solutions:** Innovative nature-based solutions that promote across terrestrial and blue carbon ecosystems that conserve, restore, or improve ecosystems, including climate-resilient agriculture that advances sustainable food systems. The goal is to enable inclusive strategies that ensure food security and restore ecological balance.

**Circular Economy:** Innovative solutions that promote both waste and water circularity and help adapt to climate-related disasters. The goal is to prevent and manage pollution, improve community health, enhance resilience to climate change impacts, and significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The competition spans from April to October 2026, with the key timeline and activities listed below:

- Application period (April - June 2026)
- Announcement of finalists (August 2026)
- Mentorship (August 2026)
- Grand Finale (September/October 2026)

Since its inauguration in March 2023, CIIC has already shown a clear impact in advancing innovation and accelerating the deployment of sustainable solutions in Indonesia.

The initiative has brought together senior mentors, strategic partners, and industry stakeholders from leading corporations such as PLN, Sinarmas, and Triputra Agro Persada to help strengthen the climate tech ecosystem. Moreover, with its catalytic support, past winners have gone on to achieve meaningful milestones in technology, commercialisation, and global validation.

Among them, BANIQL has emerged as a strong example of downstream impact. The company has developed a proprietary technology to produce nickel intermediates for battery applications from ore, with the potential to significantly reduce the environmental footprint of nickel production.

Supported by CIIC, BANIQL subsequently secured additional grant funding from the South Korean Government to support global commercialisation of its nickel product. Its progress has also been recognised internationally through its selection into the Creative Destruction Lab Minerals 2024-2025 cohort and its status as a WIPO Global Awards 2025 finalist. Notably, BANIQL's technology has demonstrated up to 95 per cent lower energy use and 80 per cent lower water consumption compared to conventional nickel production methods.

Qarbotech is another strong example of CIIC's impact in supporting scalable climate solutions for agriculture. The company is focused on improving agricultural productivity through a photosynthesis enhancer for agriculture, demonstrating yield improvement of up to 30 per cent. Their solution has been validated by third parties across more than 40 crop types and 8,000 acres of commercial farmland. Qarbotech was also selected as a 2025 Breakthrough Energy Fellow, becoming the first Malaysian company to join the program.

Across several editions, CIIC has received more than 1,300 applications from over 60 countries.

## GMA NEWS

### [Gallery by Chele: How the Michelin-starred restaurant stumbled into sustainability](#)

By: Lou Albano

Gallery by Chele didn't set out to win the inaugural Michelin Green Star in the Philippines, an award given by the prestigious global restaurant rating system to establishments "at the forefront of the industry when it comes to sustainable practices."

In fact, Chef Chele Gonzalez says they don't even market themselves as a sustainable restaurant.

"This didn't happen because I wanted to be a sustainable restaurant," Chele tells GMA News Online on Zoom one afternoon. "It happened because of the way I learned how to cook. You get seasonal ingredients, we work directly with farmers — and sometimes sustainable ingredients mean quality ingredients," he says.

According to the Michelin Guide, inspectors consider a number of things when giving out the Green Star, including "the provenance of the ingredients, the use of seasonal produce, the restaurant's environmental footprint, food waste systems, general waste disposal, and recycling."

When the Michelin Guide first introduced the Green Star in 2021, Gallery by Chele was nearly 10 years into practicing what the Michelin Guide calls sustainability.

Their evolving menus had already been highlighting local ingredients, like heirloom rice and local salts. And their team of chefs had already been experimenting with what otherwise would've been considered agricultural waste, like cacao pulp.

In its fifth floor space in BGC, Gallery by Chele was already keeping a small garden, where they grow local and endemic herbs, like pancit-pancitan, talinum, gotu kola, and the insulin plant. The garden also allows them to minimize food waste through composting.

These are all important actions to take to curb climate change: minimizing food and agricultural waste reduces methane emissions, said to be a more dangerous greenhouse gas than carbon in the long run. Using local ingredients and growing your own food meanwhile reduce carbon emissions. Working directly with communities and ensuring local ingredients and practices continue to thrive are the very sense of climate work.

But "reducing a few kilos of waste isn't really gonna change anything in the in the environment." Chele says conscious not to greenwash.

He says they do it "because the practice means something to us."

"It's our values, and in everything that we do, we try to give value — to the local ingredients, to the farmers, to the communities, to the heirloom rice varieties, to the work."

When Chele and co-owner Chef Carlos Villaflor went up the stage to receive the Green Star Award in October 2025, they were already neck-deck in the pursuit of adding more value to things. They were in the planning stages of yet another garden revamp. They were also set to reintroduce the Heirloom Rice tasting menu.

Gallery by Chele is famous for its an ever-evolving tasting menus that come in a 6 or 10 course extravaganza, with a vegetarian option to the fish/meat meal to boot, too. Centering on one particular ingredient, the menu often takes diners on a culinary journey with inventive approaches, wild reimaginings, skilled execution, and inspired application.

This year, it's the Heirloom Rice Tasting Menu, which features a host of varieties including the endangered Unoy from the Pasil community in Kalinga that Chele is trying to support and promote, and in doing so, preserve.

"It would have disappeared," he said. But that's getting ahead of the story.

The Heirloom Rice experience begins with a welcome drink made from local ingredients and homegrown ferments. Diners are then taken on a short tour around the restaurant, first stopping by the garden, where their garden Chef, Enzo Olalia, explains the restaurant's sustainability practices and efforts at growing their own ingredients while presenting a small nibble made of and inspired by the plants grown there.

According to Villaflor, the garden is something of an ode to foraging, which "Chef Chele and I do a lot of."

"At the same time, we go to different farms, different communities — so these are things that we kind of want to bring home and try to plant and see how we can propagate and use in the restaurant," he said.

From the garden, diners are taken to the Studio Lab, where their research and development, often taking them to far corners of the country are explained. Team members present the near-scientific but delicious experiments that they engage in, like the curious little bite consisting of a fermented mango covered in fuzz that is bubod, a traditional starter culture that contains yeast, molds, and bacteria.

Magic starts when diners are seated back at their table. Through each course, rice is presented in all its glorious possibilities: as wine soaking a beautifully cooked grouper, as a cracker paired with the delicious wagyu A5, as vinegar to the stellar pulpo dish, as the unusual fermented ice cream served with succulent crab meat, as the rich arroz caldo base to the the abalone, as mirin to a joyful kinilaw— everything it seems except in the form of rice as we know it.

Heirloom rice is one of the things that the Spanish chef discovered while getting to know the country he would eventually call home. "We're talking about 2014," Chele said of the year he dove head first into research and exploration.

He recalled his old paella restaurant where he "was focused to really use local ingredients as much as we could." Chele went to IRRI, gave the bomba rice (often used in paella) so they could do a scientific study to find the closest variety to it, and also embarked on a 40-day travel around the country, meeting with so many communities around the country, and landed on various heirloom rice varieties.

Some of those varieties are now featured in Gallery's current menu: Tinawon, Deremen, Ginnonaw, Black Lennangang, and Unoy from the Pasil community in Kalinga, which incidentally is the only indigenous community in the Philippines recognized by Slow Food, a global movement working "to ensure good, clean and fair food for all" and its Unoy rice, the first Slow Food Presidia in the country, described in the website as slow food communities "committed to preserving and passing on traditional production techniques and crafts."

Pasil was among the communities Chele visited in 2014. He would once again meet them at the Slow Food Terra Madre Asia Pacific 2025, "the largest sustainable food event in the region," Ramon Uy Jr, International Councilor for Southeast Asia of Slow Food, told GMA News Online on email.

"I introduced him [Chele] to the Slow Food Community of Pasil and following the event, he visited the community to learn and conduct research for his new menu. We are thrilled that more chefs are championing local Ark of Taste and presidia ingredients through the support of Slow Food communities," adds Uy.

In reconnecting with the Pasil community, Chele also enlisted the help of Department of Tourism "because you cannot go there yourself."

For Chele, featuring Unoy in the menu is one way to help the community. "When I went there, people didn't want to do it anymore because it's just so much work. The prices were still the same, and they did not have any support."

But he takes it a step further: At Gallery by Chele, diners not only learn more about it as they eat their way through dinner, they are also given the chance to directly support the farmers; the restaurant is selling the rice at a fair price so they "can continue to grow it and earn enough."

Located in the Kalinga Province right next to the more popular municipality of Buscalan, Pasil sits in highly fertile soil some 700m above sea level.

Unsurprisingly, a body of water, the Pasil River, has made the land "particularly suited to agriculture," Slow Food says. Its rice terraces are not just a marvel to look at, they also boast

high biodiversity. According to Slow Food, "it is possible to find 18 different native Unoy rice varieties still being grown in the area."

But in the post-war population boom, which required the scaling up and the speeding up of food production, traditional rice varieties like Unoy — which required a lot more work and a lot more time — had to take a back seat to commercial and high yielding rice varieties.

Despite industrialization, despite climate change, despite the younger generations leaving the mountains for the grayer pastures of the city, the Pasil community persisted. Rice, after all, is life.

According to Slow Food, the Unoy rice varieties in Pasil "are traditionally served during weddings and family reunions, especially during 'pusipus' celebration, the gathering of relatives before a sick or elderly family member dies. The glutinous or sticky rice varieties are instead used in a wide variety of recipes, mixed with coconut or coconut milk and to make rice wine."

It was in the mid-2000s, when Pasil started exporting their heirloom rice that it made its way to a Slow Food member. In 2009, three of its heirloom rice varieties received nominations to be included in the Ark of Taste, Slow Food's catalogue of endangered food products, which currently lists 119 items from the Philippines, including Asin Tibuok from Visayas, Barako Coffee, and Batwan).

According to Uy, there will have been a few more engagements between the two parties before Pasil's official recognition as the first Indigenous community in the Philippines in 2017.

The recognition paved the way for Pasil to receive the "'Food and Tourism for Rural Development in the Cordillera' a collaborative project with the Department of Tourism, Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), FAO Mountain Partnership and Slow Food, which helped identify the Ulikan Red Rice of Pasil," Uy said.

That served as the starting point for the community to identify and reintroduce a whopping 33 more heirloom rice varieties. When the opportunity came for Slow Food to develop a Presidia in the Philippines, "the Pasil community was the natural choice," Uy said.

The Unoy Presidium was established in 2024.

"There are no historical testimony of the connection between the rice and the Pasil Valley other than the indigenous people oral knowledge, which has been threatened by the introduction of high yielding products during the Green Revolution," Slow Food said.

From being overlooked for reasons of food security, Unoy is now interestingly being recognized for, well, food security. Unoy is highly resilient to drought, which is a main concern given climate change. Where before it took a back seat for the newer, higher-yielding varieties of the Green

Revolution, Unoy is now seen as "crucial for ensuring food security and preserving Pasil's rich agricultural heritage."

The Unoy Rice Presidium has only been up and running for two years and already, production of Unoy Rice has doubled from 30 hectares in seven barangays in 2024 to 60 hectares in 13 barangays last year. "Direct sales in local markets increased by 20% while there was also a 15% increase in direct national sales. A clear signal that the Unoy Presidia is helping in the preservation and conservation for the IP communities of Pasil," Uy said.

In many ways, Gallery by Chele is highlighting everything we stand to lose in the face of climate change: food security and the delight of a delicious and nutritious meal; indigenous wisdom and practices, our culture and tradition.

Villaflor brings up acute observations: The fluctuation of prices, which is a clear indication of dwindling supplies, and the growing challenges of maintaining a garden in the building, thanks to urban development.

"The weather is very inconsistent," he says, "and now with all the buildings, the sunlight isn't as good as before. We'd be lucky to get four hours of sunlight." Previously, they had no trouble getting a solid eight hours of sunlight, Villaflor said.

But in many ways, Gallery by Chele is also showing what can be done. Minimizing food waste, leaning on local ingredients, supporting local communities — these are insights gained from being a foreigner, he said.

Because in moving to the Philippines, Chele landed in country with a restaurant scene that didn't quite make sense — "You are in the second biggest biodiversity hotspot for fish and seafood in the world and you import fish?" He asked flabbergasted — and seasons that were "very unclear."

"That's why we use mostly local ingredients. That's the basis of our cuisine," Chele said.

It's not always been easy — the restaurant has survived financial struggles in the past — the inaugural Michelin Green awardee is seeing the results of their hard work and their decision to stand by their values pay off.

Still, Chele maintains "we are not here to fix the world. We are not here to fix the industry."

The Green Star "didn't happen because we wanted to be a sustainable restaurant," he continued, emphasizing their initiatives are only "small actions that have a good impact."

The restaurant's sustainability efforts, he says, is the result of the team doing "what matters to us."

And what matters is integrity; doing "things very well" and doing things that felt right.

"State truthfully what you believe and state truthfully what you want to do," Chele said. "I think at the end of the day, integrity is the most important part. We didn't necessarily start as trying to be sustainable. It just happened because we stayed true to our values."

He acknowledges that perhaps "we're good for the environment, but that is not our main focus. It only happened because we have principles and what ever action we can do that goes in that direction, we are happy to do."

In the meantime, the green Michelin award is pushing them to improve. It's got them looking back to nature, and leaning even more on their values — the seasonality of produce, the quality it provides.

"We're very seasonal," Villaflor proudly says. "If [an ingredient] is not in season, then we'll look for another ingredient that nature can provide us at this very moment."

"We really have to be flexible. We have remind ourselves that this is nature. It is nothing we can control, but we can understand it, how it can provide us the best of what we need for the restaurant."

## MANILA BULLETIN

### [Iran war puts focus on petrochemicals used in numerous products and a driver of climate change](#)

The Iran war has exposed deep vulnerability in the global economy: dependence not just on oil, gas and coal for fuel, but on petrochemicals that underpin everything from food production to plastic packaging.

As disruptions ripple through energy markets, the war is highlighting how fossil fuels are embedded far beyond transport and electricity. In the short-run, the widespread reliance will lead to higher prices for myriad products, while long-term the pollution that comes from petrochemicals will exacerbate climate change.

A two-week cease fire announced late Tuesday is a hopeful sign that the war, and energy disruptions, will abate. But no matter when it finally ends, for many environmentalists to energy experts, ultimately the war is a stark sign that the status quo needs to change.

“We cannot continue relying on fossil fuels neither for energy nor for material,” said Delphine Lévi Alvarès, global petrochemicals campaign manager at the Center for International Environmental Law. “We cannot continue relying on fossil fuels for absolutely everything around us.”

Petrochemicals are expected to be a central topic of discussion in Santa Marta, a northern coastal city in Colombia, where governments will gather from April 24-29 for an international conference on transitioning away from fossil fuels. Experts say discussions will center on reducing demand because the sector is a major driver of future fossil fuel use. Indeed, environmentalists have long argued that fossil fuel companies, realizing that electric vehicles and green technologies like solar threaten their industries, see petrochemicals as a place for their products.

Petrochemicals are primarily made from oil and gas and used to manufacture a wide range of everyday products, from plastic packaging and synthetic clothing to fertilizers, paints and medical equipment. Unlike fuels that are burned for energy, petrochemicals are turned into materials, making them a less visible but still deeply engrained in daily life.

Much of the global petrochemical industry is concentrated in the Persian Gulf region of the Middle East, including major producers of fertilizers and the chemicals used to make plastics.

Petrochemicals are a growing driver of fossil fuel demand

Petrochemicals already account for a significant share of global oil use and are expanding rapidly, even as some countries cut fuel use in power and transport.

Fredric Bauer, a senior lecturer at Lund University in Sweden who studies industrial transformation in chemicals and plastics, said the sector is increasingly central to the fossil fuel system.

“Petrochemicals are not just a sort of byproduct or something that happens on the side,” Bauer said.

He said that petrochemicals account for 15%-16% of oil demand and are among the fastest-growing uses, with new industrial facilities increasingly designed to maximize chemical production rather than fuels.

For consumers, that demand is largely invisible. Petrochemicals are built into everyday products such as plastics, fertilizers and synthetic materials, making their role in the economy easy to overlook.

Supply chains for petrochemicals are fragile

Beyond fuel markets, disruptions to oil and gas flows can quickly ripple through industries that rely on petrochemical inputs — particularly agriculture, which depends heavily on fossil fuel-based fertilizers.

Bauer said that the Middle East plays a key role not only in exporting oil and gas, but also in supplying petrochemical feedstocks and fertilizers such as ammonia and urea. Any disruption during planting seasons can cascade into global food systems.

“It’s not just a disruption in the global trade of oil,” he said. “It’s also a disruption in the global trade of chemicals.”

That, he warned, can translate into higher food prices and broader economic strain.

Trisia Farrelly, an environmental anthropologist at the Cawthron Institute in New Zealand, said that the crisis underscores how exposed global systems remain after decades of dependence on fossil fuels.

“For me, this is like another COVID wake-up call,” she said, pointing to risks for food security and livelihoods tied to rising costs and supply disruptions.

She said that agriculture is one of the hardest sectors to transition away from petrochemicals, given its reliance on fertilizers, pesticides, plastics and fuel.

There are no simple alternatives

While reducing petrochemicals could significantly cut fossil fuel dependence, experts say there is no single solution.

Farrelly said that cutting petrochemical use — particularly in plastics — would “certainly” reduce reliance on fossil fuels. But she cautioned against assuming that alternatives like bio-based plastics can simply replace them.

“We need to be regulating out nonessential plastics,” she said, arguing that reducing demand is essential alongside any material substitution.

International negotiations on plastics pollution in recent years have failed to reach an agreement, in large part because major oil producing countries have balked at any attempt to put a limit on the production of plastics.

Bio-based plastics are generally more expensive to produce than conventional plastics made with fossil fuels and chemicals, limiting their adoption at scale, according to the European Commission Joint Research Center, the European Union’s science and knowledge service. They currently account for about 0.5% of global plastics production, the center said.

Farrelly said that shifting to alternatives without proper safeguards risks creating new environmental and social problems, particularly if it drives land use change or increases demand for agricultural inputs.

Bauer said that the same applies across the sector. Renewable energies like solar, wind and geothermal can reduce greenhouse gas emissions from production, but replacing fossil-based feedstocks is far more difficult. Recycling can help, he said, but only alongside reductions in overall consumption.

Lévi Alvarès said that reducing reliance on petrochemicals will also require changes in consumption, pointing to steps such as using fewer heavily packaged goods, supporting local food systems and connecting more directly with farmers and producers that rely less on synthetic fertilizers and pesticides.

The petrochemical industry says demand is likely to remain strong, arguing that its products are essential to modern life and the energy transition.

The American Chemistry Council, which represents U.S. chemical manufacturers, told The Associated Press in a written response to questions that petrochemicals are used in products ranging from medical devices and semiconductors to building materials and packaging, and are also key to renewable technologies such as wind turbines, solar panels and electric vehicles.

The group said that companies are working to cut emissions through efficiency improvements, recycling and new technologies, and rejected the idea that demand must fall, calling petrochemicals “foundational” to sectors such as health care, food production, clean water and infrastructure.

Lévi Alvarès, the campaign manager from the Center for International Environmental Law, said that petrochemicals have become so embedded in daily life that many people don't realize how much they rely on them, but individuals and communities can begin by rethinking consumption and engaging more closely with local systems.

“It is not a choice of the consumer,” she said, noting that many people are constrained by what is available, but can still start to look at everyday products differently.

## PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

### [ASEAN, ADB launch \\$25-M reg'l connectivity fund for energy](#)

By: Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) are mobilizing USD25 million worth of financing to accelerate ASEAN Power Grid investments and support access to reliable power supply in the region.

The Regional Connectivity Fund (RCF) for Energy under the ASEAN Infrastructure Fund (AIF) was formally launched during the 2026 ASEAN Finance Deputies' Meeting (AFDM) on April 7, according to the ASEAN 2026 Secretariat on Thursday.

With an initial funding of USD25 million from Australia, Canada, the European Union, Germany, and the United Kingdom, the RCF will finance grants and provide technical assistance to develop cross-border energy projects across the region.

This includes feasibility studies, engineering design, financial structuring, and safeguards assessments.

It will also fund activities related to policy advice, regulatory improvements, capacity building, and knowledge sharing to improve the enabling environment for the ASEAN Power Grid.

The ASEAN Power Grid is the regional bloc's flagship initiative to achieve fully integrated electricity grid operations by 2045.

At the AFDM, the ASEAN senior finance officials also pushed for the alignment of priorities and protection of public resources amid tightening fiscal space and rising global uncertainty.

Discussions focused on strengthening public financial management, mobilizing investments, and keeping fiscal policies responsive to evolving challenges — from energy market volatility to supply chain disruptions.

The meeting also endorsed the ASEAN Climate Finance Policy Platform, an initiative launched by ADB in 2024 to enhance exchanges on climate change among ASEAN finance ministries.

## THE BUSINESS TIMES

### [Regulation can bolster Asean's food and energy resilience](#)

By: Duke Hipp

WHILE the world holds its collective breath in the wake of the provisional ceasefire in Iran, the conflict and developments at the Strait of Hormuz have painfully illustrated the interconnection between energy and food.

The off-again, on-again passage through the channel of critical fertilisers, oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplies are affecting availability and prices, keeping experts from both sectors busy adjusting and readjusting forecasts.

Food and energy security have always been intertwined at the crossroads of food, feed, fibre and fuel. In Asean, their shared space also includes policy and regulatory gaps that hinder regional resilience.

Asean realities: growing population and climate change

Two realities unique to South-east Asia continue to shape the broader landscape: population growth and climate change.

Asean is growing. According to the latest estimates, the region is home to just over 700 million people. By 2035, that figure is projected to climb to more than 741 million – with growth in Indonesia and the Philippines leading the way.

A booming population equates to a higher demand for supplies of safe, nutritious food as well as reliable sources of energy.

Meanwhile, South-east Asia is among the most vulnerable regions to climate change, which has also wreaked havoc with food and energy production.

An increase of floods, droughts and erratic weather in the region is disrupting planting, cultivation and harvesting seasons for roughly 100 million smallholder farmers.

A recent report looking at the impact of climate change on regional food security projected a decline in available crop land in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines of more than 10 per cent by 2028, if no action is taken. Rice production in Vietnam and Thailand may also be reduced by 19 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively.

Regional energy production has also been far from immune from the reach of climate change.

While hydropower is playing an increasingly significant role in South-east Asia's mix of energy sources (accounting for almost 20 per cent of the total electricity produced across the region), its vulnerability to prolonged droughts is debilitating.

Both Laos and Vietnam experienced devastating droughts in 2023 that battered their hydropower operations and cost dearly – Laos’ hydropower exports to Thailand dropped by 30 per cent, and lost productivity in Vietnam amounted to US\$1.4 billion.

In terms of vulnerability to extreme heat, an astonishing 70 per cent of energy-sector assets in South-east Asia fell into the “red flag” or “high” category, according a December 2022 Asian Development Bank study.

#### Regulatory revisit

Calls on the Asean food and energy security fronts centre around the need for resilience.

While larger regional regulatory harmonisation across key parts of the sectors is the right aspiration, we need fundamental frameworks at the national level now. This will ultimately help drive momentum for the larger harmonisation goal.

So, what might an Asean member state regulatory wish list look like? Here are a few good places to start.

#### Enable agricultural innovation

Advances in the agricultural technology world over the past decade have been extraordinary. Plant science technologies (such as gene-editing breakthroughs driving increased yields and nutrition, drought-tolerant seeds and biopesticides), agricultural applications for drones, and a host of other innovations are changing the game.

Without the regulatory frameworks to ensure they reach our region’s farmers, it is a lost opportunity to drive resilience on farms.

#### Carbon capture, utilisation and storage (CCUS)

Around 80 per cent of South-east Asia’s energy is generated from fossil fuels. With the demand for power growing alongside the region’s population, reducing this reliance while also meeting current and near-term demands becomes a key question.

National CCUS regulatory frameworks that help “decarbonise” existing younger energy-sector assets present a pragmatic next step.

#### Crack down on counterfeits

The sale of counterfeit products across the food and agriculture landscape in South-east Asia (from agricultural inputs to food and drinks) is far too prevalent – including on e-commerce platforms.

Unregulated and counterfeit pesticides, in particular, threaten human and environmental health, crop yields and our water supply. Robust regulations and enforcement against counterfeits will help drive greater food resilience.

#### Biofuel standards

The demand for biofuels across Asean is on the rise, becoming a crucial component of the region's energy transition. Whether imported or produced in the region, biofuels help reduce the reliance on imported oil and support national decarbonisation aspirations. Domestic production of biofuels also leverages existing agricultural resources.

With regional harmonisation still on the aspirational horizon, embedding transparent, pragmatic and evidence-based regulatory standards for biofuels at the national level will strengthen resilience for the sector.

These are not new ideas. Asean's strategic 2026 to 2030 blueprints for the food and energy sectors refer to them both directly and indirectly. (These are the Asean Food, Agriculture and Forestry Sectoral Plan and the Asean Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation.)

Food and energy security in South-east Asia are two sides of the same coin. National regulatory steps to act on the most critical components of the Asean blueprints will help drive much-needed resilience in both areas.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### [Greenpeace slams govt's fossil fuel push](#)

By: Leander C. Domingo

The Philippines is at a crossroads. Its government is pushing for more oil and gas exploration in protected areas even as the country grapples with the impacts of climate change.

Saying it is the wrong move amid the energy crisis, Greenpeace Philippines is sounding the alarm over the administration's renewed push to explore fossil fuels in the Liguasan Marsh, Tawi-Tawi, Cebu, and Malampaya.

"Pivoting towards more local fossil fuel sources is not the answer to the crisis caused by a war driven by oil," said Jefferson Chua, Greenpeace Philippines climate campaigner.

"Instead of pushing us further towards fossil fuel dependence, it's the perfect opportunity for President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to prioritize the shift towards renewable energy."

The Liguasan Marsh, a protected area in Mindanao, is believed to hold billions of cubic feet of natural gas and up to 202 million barrels of crude oil.

However, Greenpeace warns that exploiting these resources would unleash greater ecological damage and climate emissions, putting vulnerable communities at risk.

The marsh is home to carbon-rich peatlands, which store vast amounts of carbon that can rapidly release greenhouse gases when disturbed.

"Opening Liguasan Marsh to extraction risks turning it into a massive carbon bomb," Chua said.

The government's move is also happening as the Philippines prepares to submit its updated Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change this April. The NDC embodies efforts by countries to reduce national emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

"We challenge Marcos to walk the talk and uphold our country's commitment in reducing our greenhouse gas emissions," Chua said.

"Plunging us deeper into fossil fuel dependency would prove him as a two-faced leader in the face of people's suffering due to the energy and climate crisis." Greenpeace is also urging the government to prioritize renewable energy and safeguard the country's ecosystems instead of opening them up to fossil fuel development.

"Pivoting to renewables will not only give the earth a chance to breathe — it's a chance to shield Filipinos from economic shocks brought about by wars overseas," Chua added.

The local communities in Maguindanao del Sur have already reported finding flammable water from local sources, pointing to underlying oil deposits. The Department of Energy has described Liguasan Marsh's energy potential as "very good," following the president's declaration of a National State of Energy Emergency.

Bangsamoro Cabinet Secretary Mohd Asnin Pendatun has stated that the "long-term" energy solution in Mindanao lies in fast-tracking the vast energy reserves of Tawi-Tawi and Liguasan.

However, Greenpeace said that the marsh must be safeguarded through strong legal protections, instead of being opened to fossil fuel development under the guise of an energy crisis.

## THE NEW YORK TIMES

### [Northeast States Set Big Climate Goals. Now Those Plans Are in Trouble.](#)

By: Brad Plumer

Several years ago, in a burst of climate optimism, Democratic-led states across the Northeast adopted some of the world's most ambitious policies to shift away from fossil fuels and cut planet-warming emissions.

But today, many of those states are scaling back or rethinking their climate plans as they miss emissions targets, struggle with soaring electricity bills and confront the Trump administration's hostility to renewable energy.

In New York, Gov. Kathy Hochul recently said the state's goal for deeply cutting emissions by 2030 was now "unattainable" and asked the legislature to rework its landmark climate law. Regulators had been discussing fees on polluters to help meet that goal, but Ms. Hochul said the costs passed onto consumers would be too high.

In Massachusetts, lawmakers are eyeing cuts to a program that adds charges to utility bills to fund heat pumps and efficiency upgrades, while Gov. Maura Healey has pursued a flurry of energy policy changes to address affordability.

In Rhode Island, Gov. Dan McKee has proposed delaying a legal deadline for the state to get all of its electricity from renewables, from 2033 to 2050, claiming that the current mandate would impose steep near-term costs.

"The biggest hardship I hear from Rhode Islanders right now is their growing energy bills," Mr. McKee said after proposing to reduce state charges on utility bills that would have funded solar panels and other climate programs, in a move he estimated would save residents \$1 billion over five years. "We need to provide relief now."

Most Northeastern governors still say tackling global warming is a priority. And climate advocates have fought against rollbacks, arguing that cutting clean energy and efficiency programs might ease burdens on taxpayers today, but will cost more in the long run by leaving the region exposed to volatile oil and gas prices.

But the ambitious targets look increasingly out of reach. Various states had aimed to reduce emissions roughly in half by 2030 and nearly zero them out by midcentury. Yet New York's emissions have barely budged since 2021, while carbon dioxide from New England's power plants has increased the past two years.

Many Democrats blame President Trump. Northeastern states had planned to build giant wind farms in the Atlantic Ocean to produce clean power, but that has become exceedingly difficult

with the White House's attacks on offshore wind. Federal tax breaks for solar panels and electric cars have been eliminated.

Mr. Trump's antagonism to renewable energy isn't the only factor, though. The Northeast has for years had some of the nation's highest electricity rates, partly driven by local policies. Some Democratic governors, worried about looming electricity shortages, now want to reconsider longstanding taboos against expanding nuclear power or natural gas pipelines.

It's a sign of how the political landscape has shifted in the Trump era, as Democrats try to balance fears of a warming planet with immediate concerns about the cost of living.

"I think, generally speaking, if it's affordable, New England governors are now willing to consider it," said Gov. Ned Lamont, Democrat of Connecticut.

A struggle to meet clean energy goals

In 2019, New York passed a sweeping law requiring the state to cut emissions 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030 and to essentially stop emitting greenhouse gases by 2050. Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Vermont adopted similar goals.

At the time, business groups and critics called the targets unrealistic and expensive. But supporters said that while the Northeast would need big upfront investments in clean energy, the region would ultimately benefit from weaning itself off fossil fuels.

"The argument at the time was that these targets were achievable with the right mix of technological progress and federal support," said Noah Kaufman, a senior research scholar at Columbia University's Center on Global Energy Policy.

"But," he added, "a lot has happened between then and now."

To meet their goals, Northeastern states planned to build more than a dozen wind farms in the ocean, since there is less room onshore for renewables. That meant creating an entire offshore wind industry from scratch. But the coronavirus pandemic wrecked supply chains and interest rates rose, which delayed projects and caused costs to skyrocket.

Then Mr. Trump returned to office and sought to block offshore wind, a technology he detests. While four offshore wind projects are still under construction, it is unclear if more can be built. New York's climate plan calls for 9,000 megawatts of offshore wind by 2035, enough to power 6 million homes. Currently, only 1,800 megawatts are set to come online.

"That was a huge setback," said Kyle Murray, the director of state program implementation at Acadia Center, a clean energy advocacy group. "Offshore wind was the primary strategy that states like Massachusetts were going to pursue for its electricity future, and now it's shut down."

Yet Mr. Trump wasn't the only obstacle. Local hurdles also stymied projects.

In Maine, landowners fought a proposed transmission line to shuttle onshore wind power to the rest of New England. In western Massachusetts, residents have opposed large solar farms. In New York, 97 communities have enacted moratoriums on battery storage, often over fire concerns.

Massachusetts, New York and Vermont have also recently shut down nuclear plants after opposition from antinuclear activists. Those closures, including of Indian Point outside New York City, removed a large chunk of carbon-free power.

The slow build-out of clean energy means the Northeast still relies primarily on natural gas for power and heat — which is relatively expensive, since there are limited pipelines to bring in cheap gas from places like Pennsylvania. Over the past decade, Democrats and environmentalists have blocked several proposed pipelines.

Today, residential electricity rates in the Northeast are twice as high as those in the Midwest or South and climbing fast. High natural gas prices, weather disasters and rising transmission costs are major factors, but clean energy mandates also add costs, a study from Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory found.

In New York, a state analysis found its climate law added \$10 to \$12 per month to residential electric bills in 2024, a figure expected to rise over time. While those costs don't capture the law's benefits, such as cleaner air, they have made politicians squeamish at a time of high inflation.

Expensive power can also make it harder to persuade people to switch to electric cars or heat pumps, two key climate strategies.

At the same time, some policymakers say that renewable energy isn't enough to meet the region's needs. During a ferocious storm this winter, New England produced little electricity from wind or solar at times and couldn't import enough gas to cover demand. So power plants had to burn oil, a much dirtier fuel, instead. Meanwhile, a transmission line to bring hydropower from Quebec finally came online after years of delay — except Quebec had little power to spare, either.

The Trump administration piled on, citing the storm and the Northeast's high prices as evidence of the follies of climate policy.

“The timing could not have been more cinematic,” said Dan Dolan, executive director of the New England Power Generators Association, a trade group. “It really encapsulated the consequences of where we sit.”

A pivot to 'affordability'

Many Democratic governors are looking to revamp their climate plans.

In New York, Ms. Hochul said that because of offshore wind delays and other setbacks, meeting the state's 2030 goals for reducing emissions would now require such drastic cuts and steep fees on industries that it could cost the typical household thousands of dollars per year. She has asked legislators to instead require more gradual emissions cuts over the next decade.

"Help us change the climate law," she said last month. "We're not saying no to it. We're just saying give us a longer runway."

In Rhode Island, Mr. McKee has proposed postponing deadlines to switch entirely to renewable energy, saying that the Trump administration's actions have made existing targets "challenging." In Massachusetts, Ms. Healey has delayed a state clean heat standard aimed at transitioning homes away from fossil-fuel heating, citing concerns about costs. A similar standard in Vermont died amid industry backlash.

Environmentalists have opposed many of these changes, arguing that expensive natural gas is the biggest reason for high energy prices in the region, and the quicker utilities can get off gas, the better. That means doubling down on efficiency and conservation measures, solar power and batteries while investing less in extending gas pipelines to new homes, they say.

"We could cut all these clean energy programs now and save a little on bills, but we're still going to be in a constant cycle of natural gas costs going up unless we figure out how to break the cycle," said Mr. Murray of Acadia Center.

Because New England still relies heavily on heating oil for homes, the region has been hit hard by price spikes stemming from the Iran conflict.

Some governors, desperate to rein in costs, are exploring new ways to speed up clean energy deployment while lowering bills. Ms. Healey in Massachusetts has moved to streamline permitting for solar projects, reduce electricity rates for heat pump owners and make the grid more flexible to reduce the need to build additional power plants.

"We can bring more energy in to lower people's bills and bring more clean energy in to reduce emissions all at the same time," Ms. Healey said.

More contentiously, Ms. Hochul, Mr. Lamont and Ms. Healey have also expressed openness to new natural gas pipelines, which studies suggest could save the region money on gas costs — though they could also slow the shift to low-carbon energy. A few smaller pipeline expansions have begun moving forward.

All six New England governors also recently voiced support for expanding nuclear power — a stark turnaround for a region with a history of opposing the technology. Ms. Healey has asked Massachusetts legislators to lift a 1980s-era moratorium on new nuclear plants, an energy source supported by the Trump administration.

“We need to make sure we’re getting all types of energy supply into the region to meet our growing needs,” said Ms. Healey. “We can’t just put our eggs in one basket.”

New York and New England together make up less than 1 percent of global carbon dioxide emissions, so they have only a small direct influence over rising temperatures. But as blue states hope to fill the gap after the federal government’s retreat on climate, many hope the Northeast can show that boosting clean energy can be popular and beneficial.

“We’ve spent years building up climate laws and economic development models around clean energy,” J. Timmons Roberts, an environmental studies professor at Brown, said of Rhode Island’s proposed rollbacks. “Are we really just going to give that up in a moment of panic?”

## CCC IN THE NEWS:

### DAILY TRIBUNE

#### [The cost of energy dependence and the discipline to break it](#)

By: Secretary Robert EA Borje

Every time conflict breaks out in the Middle East, it finds its way into Filipino homes. Not through headlines but through higher electricity bills, transport costs and more expensive food.

We do not see the conflict but we feel it. We pay for instability we do not control.

When the pressure builds, we reach for what we know — more fuel and more imports. We keep the lights on and then move on.

It works. Until it doesn't.

This is where the conversation on climate change becomes real in the way monthly bills are real.

Long before emissions or energy transitions, we understood something simpler: how to care for land, for water, for each other.

We did not need policy to learn that. Care is not the constraint. Consistency is.

The climate crisis arrives unannounced, stays longer and costs more. And when costs rise, attention shifts. By then, survival takes priority and climate action begins to feel optional. But it isn't and it shouldn't.

This is where Earth Hour earns its place.

For one hour, lights go out, buildings dim, and skylines soften. The country breathes, briefly.

This year, the Department of Energy reported a 145.43-megawatt reduction. Over 145,000 kilowatt-hours avoided.

It happened during peak evening demand, when power is most expensive and often fueled by imported energy. In simple terms, we avoided high-cost power for one hour.

Then the lights came back on. The lesson learned since 2007 when we started observing Earth Hour — if demand can shift even briefly then it was never as fixed as we assumed.

We tell ourselves the system is too large to change. Then, for 60 minutes, we change it. Not dramatically nor permanently, but enough to ease pressure on the grid and reduce expensive peak generation.

These are not small gains, particularly for households that count every peso, or to the businesses that pass on every increase. This is the quiet arithmetic of everyday life.

And it is also where global events land and hit hard.

Tensions in the Middle East tighten supply. Prices react. Effects travel quickly.

For a country like the Philippines, that exposure is immediate. Mas mahal na kuryente. Mas mahal na pamasaha. Mas ramdam na gastos sa araw-araw.

While we do not see the conflict, we absorb it.

But the harder, inconvenient truth: Crises do not always push us forward. Sometimes, they pull us back.

In moments like this, the instinct is to secure supply quickly and lean on the familiar — imported fuel, existing coal, short-term fixes that keep everything running.

That is understandable. But it is also how dependence deepens.

Temporary solutions settle in. Systems follow what is reinforced. So the same crisis that exposes our vulnerability can also extend it if we respond only to the immediate.

But, certainly, crises can also do the opposite and force clarity.

It can accelerate decisions, move investments faster, sharpen priorities, and make renewable energy and efficiency not just environmental but also strategic.

A crisis can lock us into the past but it can also push us, finally, into the future.

This is where government matters most.

Under the leadership of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., the Philippines has advanced a coherent set of policy frameworks —the Philippine Development Plan, the National Adaptation Plan, the Nationally Determined Contribution and its Implementation Plan, and the Philippine Energy Plan — aligning climate action, energy security and development.

These are already shaping decisions on where we invest, how we manage risk, and how we reduce exposure in an increasingly volatile energy landscape.

Together, they point to a clear shift: toward renewable energy, reduced dependence on imported fuels, and a more secure and resilient system.

The issue now, therefore, is not policy but follow-through.

This means faster renewable energy development and deployment, better and sustainable integrated and multi-modal mass transportation, infrastructure that can withstand shocks, and accelerated transition into a low carbon economy

These are practical but difficult. They require discipline from institutions and from all of us.

Individual action still matters. Energy conservation. Smarter consumption. Less waste. Small on their own but powerful at scale. And when millions of Filipinos adjust how they use energy, the system adjusts with them.

Earth Hour shows what is possible yet what truly matters is what happens after.

We often define resilience as the ability to recover, but in a time like this, that is not enough. Genuine resilience is the ability to avoid disruption in the first place.

The world will remain uncertain. Energy markets will move. Crises will come without warning. We cannot control that but we can certainly decide how exposed we are to it.

We can keep paying for a system we do not control or begin shaping one that works better for us. That choice is not made once. It is made in the habits we keep and the policies we advance long after the lights come back on.

## PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

### CCC warns of 'danger' heat index levels in several areas

By: Marita Moaje

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Friday called on the public to take extra precautions as heat index levels in several parts of the country have reached the “danger” category during the peak of the summer season.

In a social media post, the CCC said data from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) showed that heat index values between 33°C and 41°C fall under “extreme caution” which may cause heat cramps at heat exhaustion; 42°C -51°C under “danger level” and above 51°C as “extreme danger” which could lead to heat stroke.

Heat index is the temperature felt by the human body when relative humidity combines with actual air temperature.

For its heat index report on Friday, PAGASA recorded the highest observed heat index at 42°C in several locations, including Dumangas in Iloilo, Catarman, Northern Samar, Zamboanga City, Zamboanga del Sur, and Cotabato City, Maguindanao.

In Luzon, Tuguegarao City in Cagayan; and Ambulong and Tanauan in Batangas recorded a heat index of 40 °C.

Aparri, Cagayan; Echague, Isabela; Baler, Aurora; San Ildefonso, Bulacan; Camiling, Tarlac; Coron, Palawan; and Legazpi City, Albay recorded 39°C.

Meanwhile, Pasay City recorded a heat index of 38°C, while Quezon City; Bacnotan, La Union; Clark Airport, Pampanga; Cavite City; and Alabat, Quezon are at 37°C.

In the Visayas, Iloilo City, Iloilo; Catbalogan, Western Samar; and Borongan, Eastern Samar also recorded a 40°C heat index.

Roxas City, Capiz; La Granja and La Carlota, Negros Occidental; and Tacloban City, Leyte recorded 39°C.

Meanwhile, Mambusao, Capiz; Siquijor and Maasin, Southern Leyte; and Panglao, Bohol recorded 37°C; while Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental, and Mactan, Cebu are at 36°C.

In Mindanao, Butuan City, Agusan del Norte recorded a 41°C; Dipolog, Zamboanga del Norte is at 40°C; General Santos City and Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur, and Davao City are at 39°C; Surigao City, Surigao del Norte is at 38°C; and Malaybalay, Bukidnon is at 35°C.

Meanwhile, Itbayat and Basco, Batanes, as well as Tanay, Rizal, both recorded a heat index of 32 °C.

The CCC reminded the public to stay hydrated, avoid prolonged exposure to extreme heat, and limit strenuous outdoor activities, especially during midday hours.

It also urged the public to use protective measures to avoid direct sunlight, such as umbrellas, hats, and sunblock, when going outdoors.

The public is also advised to remain vigilant and monitor official advisories from the weather bureau PAGASA, the Department of Health (DOH), the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), the Philippine Red Cross (PRC), and the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP).

Emergency hotlines also remain available, including National Emergency Hotline 911, PAGASA (02) 824-0800, Philippine Red Cross (143), Bureau of Fire Protection (02) 8426-0231, and the NDRRMC (02) 8911-5061 to 65 local 100.

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