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ABS CBN

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By: Ariel Rojas

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: Dr. Teodoro Mendoza PhD

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THE GUARDIAN

Extreme heat in Europe 'a brutal reminder' of climate crisis, UN chief says

The UN climate chief has said an extreme early heat event sweeping parts of western Europe was "a brutal reminder of the spiralling impacts of the climate crisis", after France and the UK set new temperature records for May on two consecutive days.

UNDRR

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A new report – "When digital systems fail: The hidden risks of our digital world" – outlines risk scenarios on Earth, at sea, and in space, analysing the fragility of interconnected digital systems and offering a roadmap for preparedness.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

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LPA develops into tropical depression, to be named 'Domeng' upon PAR entry Thursday
By: Ariel Rojas

The low pressure area (LPA) outside the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) developed into a tropical depression at 2 p.m. Tuesday, according to PAGASA.

At 4 p.m., it was almost stationary 1,360 kilometers east of northeastern Mindanao.

It packs maximum sustained winds of 45 kilometers per hour (kph), with gustiness up to 55 kph.

While it is not yet directly affecting any part of the country, its trough or extension is already bringing scattered rains over parts of Northern Mindanao, Caraga, and Davao Region.

The tropical cyclone will gradually intensify while moving generally northwestward over the Philippine Sea.

It may enter the PAR as a tropical cyclone on Thursday and will be given the local name Domeng – the fourth storm in the country this year.

Domeng may reach typhoon intensity but will remain far from the Philippine landmass.

However, it may enhance the southwesterly winds, which could intensify into full-blown southwest monsoon or Habagat by weekend over Southern Luzon, Visayas, and western Mindanao.

Flooding and landslides may be experienced in these areas during heavy and prolonged rainfall.

However, even with the presence of winds from the west or southwest, the required five-day rainfall threshold in most of the 13 monitoring stations over western Luzon must still be met before the onset of the rainy season can be declared.

Historically, the rainy season over the western part of the country begins between May 27 and June 5.

GMA NEWS

Climate change threatens global plant species as habitats shrink

By: Marte Serafinko

Some of the plants that make familiar landscapes recognizable may not survive by century's end as climate change becomes an increasingly important driver of species loss, according to scientists, reshaping and often shrinking suitable habitats that the plants need to survive.

Researchers modeled future ranges for numerous species of vascular plants, a category that accounts for almost all the world's plants - those with water- and nutrient-carrying tissues. They looked at more than 67,000 species, meaning about 18% of the world's known vascular plants.

They found that 7% to 16% could lose more than 90% of their range, placing them at high risk of extinction. Examples include Catalina ironwood, or island ironwood, a rare endemic California tree, bluish spike-moss from a plant lineage dating back more than 400 million years, and roughly one third of Eucalyptus species, one of Australia's most recognizable plant groups.

The researchers came to their estimates after examining millions of records on plant locations as well as greenhouse-gas emissions scenarios for 2081-2100.

A plant's habitat is not simply a place on a map, but the full array of conditions it needs: temperature, rainfall, soils, land use and landscape features such as shade.

"One way to picture this is to imagine plants trying to follow a moving 'climate envelope.' As temperatures warm, many species can shift northward or uphill to stay cool enough. But temperature is only part of the story," Junna Wang, a Yale University postdoctoral researcher, and Xiaoli Dong, a professor of environmental science and policy at the University of California, Davis, said in joint comments to Reuters.

Wang and Dong helped lead the study published in the journal Science.

In many places, the study indicated, climate change is shrinking these combinations, leaving fewer areas where all the conditions that a species needs still exist together.

For plants, movement, or dispersal, usually happens across generations, via seeds or spores carried by wind, water, animals or gravity. Yet when the researchers compared realistic movement with a scenario in which plants could reach any newly suitable habitat, extinction rates were very similar.

"If slow movement were the main problem, then allowing unlimited dispersal should dramatically reduce extinction risk. But that is not what we found," Wang and Dong said.

That matters for conservation.

"If dispersal limitation were the main driver, then strategies like assisted migration - physically helping species move to new areas - could solve much of the problem. But if climate change is reducing the amount of suitable habitat overall, then simply helping species move may not be enough," they added.

The projected impacts vary by region. Cold-adapted plants in the Arctic may lose habitat as extreme cold climates shrink. Dry regions, including parts of the western United States and Mediterranean-climate regions, face risk from stronger drought, lower soil moisture and more frequent wildfires. In southern and eastern coastal Australia, coastlines may limit poleward shifts.

At the same time, local plant diversity could rise across about 28% of Earth's land surface as species move into newly suitable areas, including parts of the tropics and subtropics where increased rainfall - rather than temperature alone - could make conditions suitable for additional species, the researchers found.

They described this as a global reshuffling, with some species disappearing from parts of their historical range while others move into new areas, but said local gains do not mean plants are doing better overall.

These shifts could also create "novel communities" - combinations of plants that have not historically lived together but would begin encountering one another for the first time. How would these interactions play out? The researchers said they do not know.

Plants underpin most terrestrial ecosystems. They store carbon, stabilize soils, support wildlife and provide food, timber, medicines and other materials. So changes in plant diversity can have cascading effects on nature and people.

"If climate change reduces vegetation cover, ecosystems may absorb less carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, which can further intensify warming. That creates a feedback loop in which climate change harms plants, and reduced plant cover/productivity in turn worsens climate change," Wang and Dong said.

"Ultimately, protecting plant diversity is not only about conserving nature for its own sake - it is also about maintaining the ecological systems that support human societies," they said.

PANAY NEWS

Climate change no longer a future threat to WV – it's already here

FOR MANY years, climate change was discussed as a distant danger — a problem for future generations to confront. Scientists warned about rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, stronger storms, and threats to food security. Today, Western Visayas is living that reality.

The critically low water levels of major irrigation dams in Iloilo, Antique, Aklan, and Capiz are part of a growing pattern of extreme weather conditions that are already reshaping agriculture, livelihoods, and rural economies across the region.

Climate change is no longer a future threat. It is happening now.

The National Irrigation Administration – Region 6 confirmed that several key river irrigation systems have dropped to critical levels amid extreme heat and the looming possibility of a "Super El Niño." For thousands of farmers who depend on irrigation water for rice production, this is a direct threat to survival. When water sources dry up, crops suffer. When crops fail, farmer incomes collapse. When agricultural production declines, food prices rise and rural economies weaken.

Western Visayas, one of the country's important agricultural regions, now faces the harsh reality of climate vulnerability. Rice fields that once relied on stable rainfall patterns are increasingly exposed to prolonged dry spells and unpredictable weather conditions. Farmers who already struggle with high production costs now face another burden: uncertainty brought by extreme climate conditions.

The effects are cascading far beyond agriculture. In rural communities, reduced harvests mean less money circulating in local markets. Farm workers lose opportunities for employment. Small businesses dependent on agricultural activity suffer declining sales. Families already living on the edge are pushed deeper into financial hardship.

Even water supply itself is becoming a growing concern. Extreme heat accelerates the depletion of rivers, dams, and groundwater sources. Some communities in Iloilo City have already begun experiencing declining water availability during prolonged hot weather. If these conditions worsen, both agricultural and domestic water supply may come under greater strain.

And this may only be the beginning.

Climate scientists have repeatedly warned that rising global temperatures will intensify extreme weather events. Western Visayas is particularly vulnerable because its economy remains heavily tied to agriculture, fisheries, and natural resources — sectors highly sensitive to climate disruptions.

Yet despite these realities, responses often remain reactive rather than transformative. Government agencies implement emergency measures during droughts, but long-term climate adaptation programs still move too slowly. Watershed destruction continues. Environmental degradation persists. Urban development often ignores sustainability. Many communities still lack sufficient climate-resilient infrastructure.

The region cannot continue treating climate change as a temporary inconvenience that disappears once rains return. Agricultural planning, infrastructure development, environmental protection, and disaster preparedness must now be approached through the lens of climate resilience.

Farmers need stronger support systems, including climate-adaptive technologies, crop insurance, modern irrigation, and access to drought-resistant crops. Watersheds and forests must be protected more aggressively. Local governments must invest in sustainable water management and disaster mitigation programs. Climate adaptation should become part of mainstream governance, not a side program discussed during emergencies.

Most importantly, there must be urgency. Every drying dam, every failed harvest, every farmer forced into debt because of extreme heat is proof that climate change is already disrupting lives and livelihoods in Western Visayas.

The region is no longer preparing for a future crisis. It is already living through one.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Super El Niño could hit regions differently, study warns

By: Dr. Teodoro Mendoza PhD

The anticipated Super El Niño poses a multidimensional threat to the Philippines, worsening structural vulnerabilities in agriculture, energy, and governance. Impacts vary sharply by region due to geography, rainfall dependence, and crop profiles.

Northern and Central Luzon face severe drought and reservoir inflow deficits. Southern Luzon and Bicol experience alternating floods and dry spells. The Visayas face sugarcane and fisheries declines, while Mindanao endures localized drought affecting corn, pineapple, and export crops. These differentiated impacts underscore the need for region-specific adaptation strategies.

Historical analogs (1982-83, 1997-98, 2015-16) show recurring severe droughts and economic shocks. Super El Niño events recur every 10 to 15 years, each inflicting significant agricultural and economic losses, with projected nationwide losses of P286.8 billion (US$5.5 billion) in direct and indirect impacts.

Drawing lessons from Vietnam, Thailand, and Malaysia, pathways to resilience include irrigation modernization, cooperative empowerment, energy diversification, fiscal buffers, and ASEAN-level coordination. Implementing these reforms could reduce projected losses by 60% to 70%, strengthen food security, and raise the Philippine resilience index from 38/100 to 55/100.

Introduction

El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is a recurring climatic phenomenon that disrupts global weather patterns. When sea surface temperature anomalies in the central and eastern Pacific exceed 2 degrees Celsius, the event is classified as a Super El Niño, triggering severe drought in Asia and floods in the Americas.

The Philippines, situated at the western Pacific rim, is among the most vulnerable nations due to its monsoon-dependent agriculture, import-reliant energy system, and governance challenges. Forecasts from PAGASA and NOAA indicate a 79% probability of El Niño onset by mid-2026, persisting into early 2027.

Super El Niño could sharply reduce crop yields: rice by 20% to 25%, ube by 30%, and vegetables (no estimate provided). A rice price spike of 40% to 50% may occur.

Mechanisms of Super El Niño formation

Under normal conditions, trade winds push warm water westward, concentrating rainfall in Southeast Asia. During El Niño, these winds weaken, allowing warm water to pool in the central and eastern Pacific.
A Super El Niño intensifies this process, reversing trade winds and amplifying atmospheric convection. The result is a collapse of the southwest monsoon, prolonged drought in Asia and stronger typhoons in the western Pacific. Historical analogs (1982-83, 1997-98, 2015-16) demonstrate that Super El Niño events recur every 10 to 15 years, each inflicting severe agricultural and economic losses.

Regional differentiated impacts in the Philippines

Super El Niño impacts are not uniform across the Philippines. Severity and type of damage vary sharply by region due to geography, rainfall dependence and crop profiles, as shown in Table 1.

Northern and Central Luzon

Northern and Central Luzon (Regions 1 to 3), encompassing Cagayan Valley, Ilocos, Nueva Ecija, and Pampanga, represent the country's rice granary, producing nearly half of the national rice output. These regions are highly dependent on the southwest monsoon (Habagat) and large reservoirs such as Magat, Pantabangan, and Angat, which supply irrigation, hydropower, and urban water.

During Super El Niño events, monsoon collapse and inflow deficits of up to 50% severely disrupt water distribution. Historical data from the 1997-98 El Niño showed yield losses of 40% to 60% in Isabela and Nueva Ecija, translating into national rice shortages and price spikes (David, Intal & Balisacan, 2018).

Vulnerability is compounded by reliance on single-season rice cropping, which requires consistent water availability. When reservoirs fail, irrigation cutbacks affect hundreds of thousands of hectares.

As of 2026, the Pantabangan Dam–Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation System (UPRIIS) irrigates about 102,000 hectares of farmland in Nueva Ecija and nearby provinces, making it the largest national irrigation system in the Philippines. During El Niño, prioritization shifts to Metro Manila's water supply, leaving farmers with insufficient allocations (World Bank, 2025). This competition between agriculture and urban needs magnifies systemic risk.

Adaptation strategies must focus on irrigation modernization, including canal networks modeled after Vietnam's Mekong Delta, which redistributes water during drought. Solar-powered pumps, rainwater harvesting, and drip irrigation can reduce dependence on monsoon inflows.

Reservoir management must adopt integrated frameworks that balance agriculture, energy and urban water, avoiding zero-sum trade-offs. Crop diversification into drought-resistant varieties such as cassava, sorghum, and adlai, as well as root crops (sweet potato, gabi, cassava), can

buffer against rice yield losses. Cooperative seed banks and farmer-managed irrigation associations can enhance resilience by decentralizing water governance.

Southern Luzon and Bicol

Southern Luzon (Calabarzon) and the Bicol Region face erratic rainfall patterns during Super El Niño, alternating between drought and typhoon-induced floods. In 2015-16, Calabarzon recorded water stress in Laguna and Batangas, while Bicol experienced alternating crop failures and flood damage (PAGASA, 2016). Hydropower deficits from Angat exacerbate electricity costs, compounding urban vulnerability in Metro Manila and surrounding provinces.

Drought reduces rice, coconut, and vegetable yields, while typhoons bring episodic rainfall that often results in flooding. This instability undermines agricultural planning and damages infrastructure. For example, Bicol's abaca industry suffered significant losses in 1997-98 due to alternating drought and typhoon damage, reducing export revenues (FAO, 2019).

Adaptation requires dual contingency planning. Drought-proofing strategies include rainwater harvesting, small-scale irrigation, and crop diversification into root crops and vegetables less sensitive to rainfall variability.

Flood-proofing requires typhoon-resilient infrastructure, including storm-resistant housing, drainage systems, and resilient farm-to-market roads. Investments in early warning systems and community-based disaster preparedness can mitigate alternating extremes.

Visayas

The Visayas, particularly Western Visayas (Iloilo, Negros Occidental), is highly vulnerable due to dependence on sugarcane and rice. During the 1997-98 El Niño, sugarcane yields fell by 25%, destabilizing the ethanol and food industries (FAO, 2019).

Eastern Visayas may still receive rainfall from typhoons, but alternating floods and droughts destabilize production. Fisheries are also at risk, as warmer waters reduce catch volumes by 8% to 12%, undermining coastal livelihoods (FAO, 2019).

Adaptation requires drought-proofing sugarcane and rice through improved irrigation, crop rotation, and stress-tolerant varieties. Cooperative irrigation systems can reduce vulnerability in rainfed areas.

Fisheries adaptation — such as shifting to resilient species, investing in cold storage, and diversifying into aquaculture — can buffer against volatility. Regional contingency planning must integrate agriculture and fisheries, recognizing their interdependence in food security and livelihoods.

Mindanao

Mindanao's mixed agricultural base makes it vulnerable to both drought and erratic rainfall. Northern Mindanao (Bukidnon, Misamis) is drought-sensitive, with corn and pineapple yields falling by 30% in past El Niño events (World Bank, 2025).

Southern Mindanao (Davao, Cotabato) faces risks to banana and cacao plantations, which generate US$1.6 billion in exports annually. The Zamboanga Peninsula suffers from water shortages and 40% declines in sardine catch, disrupting the canning industry.

Adaptation requires export crop resilience through irrigation scheduling, shade management, and drought-tolerant varieties. Water management must prioritize equitable distribution across agriculture, industry, and households.

Coastal livelihood support — such as alternative income programs, aquaculture diversification, and community-based fisheries management — can mitigate declines in sardine stocks. Strengthening cooperative frameworks and integrating climate risk into export crop planning are essential to protect livelihoods and foreign exchange earnings.

Agricultural and economic losses from Super El Niño events

Super El Niño events in the Philippines (1982-83, 1997-98, and 2015-16) caused severe agricultural and economic losses, ranging from hundreds of thousands of hectares of farmland damaged to billions of pesos in lost production. The 1997-98 episode was the most devastating, while 2015-16 highlighted the persistence of prolonged drought across multiple regions (Table 2).

An ex ante financial loss analysis estimating both direct losses (farmers and fisherfolk) and indirect losses (livelihood decline, unemployment) under a severe/Super El Niño event in 2026-27 was done.

Estimated direct losses from crop failures and fishery declines total P77.8 billion, while indirect losses driven by unemployment, disrupted supply chains, and inflationary effects amount to P209 billion (Table 3). Total estimated losses are P286.8 billion (about US$5.5 billion). The combined impact would rival the devastation of the 1997-98 Super El Niño, pushing millions into poverty and destabilizing food security.

The regional breakdown of direct and indirect financial losses under a severe/Super El Niño (2026-27) scenario is shown in Table 4. The table highlights that Mindanao and Northern/Central Luzon will bear the largest financial damage.

Northern and Central Luzon bear the heaviest agricultural losses due to monsoon collapse and reservoir inflow deficits, threatening the national rice supply. Southern Luzon and Bicol face dual risks — drought and typhoon floods — destabilizing crops and infrastructure. The Visayas face sugarcane and fisheries declines, undermining ethanol and food industries.

Mindanao records the largest combined losses, driven by export crop declines (banana, cacao) and fisheries collapse in Zamboanga. Inflationary effects nationwide amplify poverty incidence, with food prices rising by 10% or more.

The Philippines must learn lessons from Vietnam, Thailand and Malaysia to reduce the projected P286.8 billion (US$5.5 billion) in losses. Adopting these pathways could yield potential savings of P165 billion to P205 billion, reducing projected losses by 60% to 70%.

Irrigation modernization and reservoir management (Vietnam model)Vietnam's Mekong Delta demonstrates resilience through its extensive canal network and adaptive water-sharing systems. During El Niño, Vietnam limited rice yield losses to 10% to 15% by redistributing water efficiently. The Philippines should expand canal systems linked to Pantabangan and Magat dams, integrate solar-powered pumps and adopt rainwater harvesting. Reservoir management must balance agriculture, energy and urban water supply. This would reduce rice yield losses by 10% to 15%, saving P15 billion to P20 billion in direct farmer income.

Cooperative empowerment and crop diversification (Thailand model)Thailand's Chao Phraya Basin integrates reservoir management with farmer cooperatives, enabling coordinated water scheduling and crop diversification. The Philippines must empower cooperatives to manage seed banks, irrigation schedules and crop diversification into root crops such as camote and cassava, as well as sorghum and adlai. This reduces middleman dominance and stabilizes farmer incomes.

Energy diversification and drought-proofing (Malaysia model)Malaysia's plantation economy (oil palm, rubber) is less drought-sensitive, supported by diversified energy sources. Malaysia avoided major electricity price spikes during El Niño by relying on natural gas and renewables. The Philippines must diversify energy sources through solar, wind, and biomass to reduce reliance on hydropower and imported oil. Promoting drought-resistant crops and plantation diversification in vulnerable regions could mitigate electricity price spikes, enabling households to save billions in inflationary losses while stabilizing export crop revenues.

Fiscal buffers and social protectionTo protect 1.5 million rural workers from unemployment shocks, cushioning P60 billion to P70 billion in indirect losses, the Philippines should establish a P50 billion to P70 billion contingency fund for agricultural relief, food-price stabilization and livelihood support. Debt restructuring may be necessary to free fiscal space. With debt service rigidity (P18.16 trillion debt, more than 65% of GDP) and peso depreciation (P61-P64/$1), fiscal space for large contingency allocations is limited. This constrains the ability to match Vietnam and Thailand's scale of relief.

ASEAN-level coordinationASEAN neighbors coordinate drought-response protocols, buffer stock systems, and food-price stabilization. Vietnam and Thailand maintain regional rice reserves, while Malaysia invests in water infrastructure. Aligning with ASEAN frameworks for joint procurement of rice and energy, climate risk pooling, and coordinated responses to El

Niño-induced yield losses could reduce import dependence, stabilize food prices, and strengthen the resilience index from 38/100 to 55/100.

Conclusion

The Philippines' vulnerability to Super El Niño reflects monsoon-dependent agriculture, energy import reliance, fiscal rigidity, and governance fragmentation. Projected nationwide losses of P286.8 billion underscore the scale of risk, with Northern and Central Luzon bearing the brunt of drought, Southern Luzon and Bicol destabilized by alternating extremes, the Visayas weakened by sugarcane and fisheries declines, and Mindanao facing export crop and coastal livelihood shocks.

Without systemic reforms, the country risks deepening import dependence, severe inflation, and worsening rural poverty. However, resilience is achievable. By modernizing irrigation systems modeled after Vietnam's canal networks, empowering cooperatives as in Thailand, diversifying energy sources following Malaysia's example, establishing fiscal buffers, and engaging in ASEAN-level coordination, the Philippines can cut losses by more than half and stabilize food systems.

Super El Niño is not new to the Philippines, but lessons from past events must now be translated into decisive action. Building resilience is not only a matter of climate adaptation. It is a national imperative for safeguarding livelihoods, food security, and economic stability.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

Philippines contributes $60,000 to IMO for climate, women's maritime programs

By Jerome Carlo Paunan

The Philippines, through its Embassy in London, has contributed $60,000 to the International Maritime Organization to support maritime climate action, capacity-building for developing nations and expanded opportunities for women in the seafaring profession, the Philippine Embassy in London announced.

Philippine Permanent Representative to the IMO Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. presented the donation to IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez on May 18 at IMO Headquarters in London.

As one of the world's leading providers of seafarers, the Philippines has long maintained active engagement with the IMO under the Marcos Jr. administration to advance maritime safety, security, environmental protection and sustainable shipping, interests that directly affect the livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of Filipino seafarers and their families.

The contribution was channeled through the IMO's Integrated Technical Cooperation Program and will fund implementation of the IMO's Strategy on Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions from Shipping.

It will also support technical cooperation assistance for Small Island Developing States and Least Developed Countries, reflecting the Philippines' commitment to solidarity with fellow developing nations.

A portion of the funds will go to the IMO's Women in Maritime Program, which seeks to expand professional opportunities for women in an industry historically dominated by men. The Philippines noted that more Filipina women are entering the seafaring profession.

Locsin said the Philippine government remains committed to protecting the welfare of Filipino seafarers, who make up a significant share of the global maritime workforce, while also contributing to broader efforts to raise safety standards and promote inclusivity in the maritime sector.

"The Philippines recognizes the importance of contributing to global efforts that enhance maritime governance, improve safety standards, and foster fair and inclusive opportunities across the maritime sector, especially for women who want to work in this field," Locsin said.

He also cited the Philippines' vulnerability to climate change as a driving factor behind the country's support for greenhouse gas reduction efforts in international shipping.

“As a climate-vulnerable country, the Philippines supports all efforts that reduce GHG emissions. By helping the IMO, we are helping not only ourselves but the entire global community in arresting the devastating effects of climate change that severely affect our own country,” Locsin said.

The Philippines currently holds a seat on the 40-member IMO Council, having been re-elected in November 2025 under Category C, which covers states with special interests in maritime transport or navigation.

THE GUARDIAN

Extreme heat in Europe ‘a brutal reminder’ of climate crisis, UN chief says

The UN climate chief has said an extreme early heat event sweeping parts of western Europe was “a brutal reminder of the spiralling impacts of the climate crisis”, after France and the UK set new temperature records for May on two consecutive days.

Simon Stiell, the executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, said on Wednesday the “main culprit” was humanity’s burning of coal, oil and gas – known to be the primary driver of climate change.

A man in glasses holds a blue umbrella while walking in a sunny Madrid square
‘It’s getting hotter and it’s not stopping’: dealing with the heat in five of Europe’s capitals
Read more
“The science is clear that human-induced climate change is making these heatwaves more frequent and extreme,” Stiell said, as France, Spain and the UK sweltered in temperatures usually associated with July or August.

“Protecting human lives, businesses and economies from extreme heat and the many other soaring costs of climate change is core business for every nation, and it starts with kicking the fossil fuel addiction much faster.”

The war in the Middle East had laid bare the “soaring costs” of fossil fuel reliance and the need to pivot to cleaner sources of energy, Stiell said, also noting 43C-plus conditions in India, where authorities have reported deaths from heatstroke.

A temperature of 35.1C (95.2F) was recorded at Kew Gardens in London on Tuesday, the UK’s Met Office said, breaking the 34.8C record set a day earlier. The readings easily surpassed a previous record of 32.8C that was set in 1922 and equalled in 1944.

France, which was expecting local highs of 39C on Wednesday, also recorded its hottest May day ever on Tuesday, when the national heat index, an average of 30 readings around the country, hit 24.8C, surpassing Monday’s 24.6C – itself a record.

Météo-France, the national weather service, said a “heat dome” – with heat held in place by a high-pressure weather front – was producing temperatures up to 13C higher than customary for the time of year.

Seventeen of France’s 96 administrative departments, including Paris, were placed on an orange high temperature alert for Thursday, the second highest level, requiring the population to “be very vigilant and take precautions”. Another 29 were on a more moderate yellow warning.

Scientists have said that as the Earth warms, extreme heat events historically confined to high summer were becoming more frequent and more intense, as well as happening earlier and later in the year, putting more people in danger.

“We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that events such as this have been made more likely and more severe due to climate change arising from our emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases,” said Peter Thorne, the director of climate research at Maynooth University in Ireland – where a record May high of 28.8C was recorded on Monday. “Nevertheless, many of the records being set, particularly in the UK and France, are mind-bogglingly crazy.”

French authorities on Tuesday reported at least seven deaths directly and indirectly linked to the high temperatures – two of competitors taking part in sporting events, and five drownings as many people sought relief at swimming spots. Authorities in Britain said four teenagers have drowned in England since Sunday.

In Spain, where temperatures could reach 40C this week, an orange weather alert was issued for the Basque Country amid predictions the northern region could reach 37C on Wednesday. Temperatures of 36C to 38C were forecast for southern regions, with a high of 38C in the south-western city of Badajoz.

Spain’s state meteorological office, Aemet, said temperatures more normally seen in July had already been recorded across the country, and the heat was “more characteristic of the dog days, the hottest period of the year”.

Rubén del Campo, an Aemet spokesperson, added: “Both this episode and the atmospheric pattern that’s causing it are part and parcel of climate change and of what’s been observed in recent years.”

UNDRR

Digital risks: New report maps critical vulnerabilities in the world's interconnected systems

A new report – "When digital systems fail: The hidden risks of our digital world" – outlines risk scenarios on Earth, at sea, and in space, analysing the fragility of interconnected digital systems and offering a roadmap for preparedness.

Experts brought together by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), and Sciences Po, call for coordinated action between countries to improve digital resilience and protect essential services like healthcare, finance, and emergency response.

"Resilience must be built into the DNA of the technologies we depend on," said Doreen Bogdan-Martin, ITU Secretary-General. "This report urges us to consider the systemic nature of risks and rethink how we protect the systems that connect and empower humanity."

"As our societies become more reliant on digital technologies, disruptions caused by disasters can cascade across systems and borders, triggering far-reaching and potentially catastrophic failures," said Kamal Kishore, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction and Head of UNDRR. "We must plan, build and maintain digital infrastructure with systemic risk in mind - now and for the future. Digital infrastructure must be resilient infrastructure".

The risks of digital dependency

Digital technologies have revolutionized how we live, connect, and work, yet our growing reliance on these systems has created risks that often go unnoticed.

A severe solar storm could disable satellites, disrupt navigation systems, and destabilize energy grids, with recovery times measured in months. Extreme temperatures could overwhelm data centers, leading to mobile service outages, as well as failures in healthcare systems and financial transactions. In the meantime, earthquakes or other natural hazards can sever vital Internet connections, slowing business operations and leaving entire nations offline for weeks.

Any specific scenario may seem isolated and unlikely, not alarming enough to prompt a timely global response. Yet digital vulnerabilities are real, and unexpected incidents are bound to happen.

The report highlights another vulnerability: societies have grown dependent on digital systems without maintaining analogue skills and ensuring adequate fallback options. When big systems fail, offline alternatives are not always available anymore.

“Facing systemic risks means looking beyond data and working across disciplines,” said Arancha González, Dean of the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po. “This report shows how evidence-based policymaking can help us build resilience in an increasingly interconnected world.”

Turning knowledge into action

The report calls on policymakers, the private sector, and civil society to act now to prevent these risks from becoming a “digital pandemic”, urging for global commitment and coordinated action.

Authors suggest considering six priorities for safeguarding critical digital infrastructure:

1. Deepen knowledge: Identify vulnerabilities, map cross-sector dependencies, develop models for potential chain reactions, and maintain analogue skills.
2. Modernize risk management: Treat non-intentional digital disruptions as a core risk by updating legal and disaster-risk frameworks and incentives.
3. Strengthen standards and planning: Establish robust fallback systems and conduct joint multi-sector scenario planning.
4. Improve coordination on critical risks: Proactively coordinate on high-impact risks affecting space weather, submarine cables, satellites, and data centres.
5. Build societal resilience: Equip communities and organizations to withstand and recover from digital disruptions by fostering adaptive capacities.
6. Foster trust and collaboration: Build capacity, convene stakeholders, and promote shared awareness and accountability across sectors and borders.
7.

The findings are the result of a collaborative process involving experts from 12 countries, representing national authorities, the private sector, academia and international organizations.

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