



## NEWS ROUNDUP

17 August 2022 [as of 08:00 am]

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- One-third of the food we eat is at risk because the climate crisis is endangering butterflies and bees
- Historic Climate Bill Passes U.S. House, Goes to Biden for Signature
- Foul-smelling seaweed covers pristine Caribbean beaches - is climate change to blame?
- Philippine economy: Firing on all cylinders
- China factories ration power as heatwave sends demand soaring
- Lawyers denounce terror financing case vs 'rights defenders'
- Firm to supply renewable energy in Bataan
- UN selects former Grenada minister as climate chief
- [OPINION] Espinoza: Climate change and the politicians
- DoST to focus on agri, food security
- PH, France eyeing more projects
- PM urges new disaster response system to cope with climate change
- 45 Years of EU-ASEAN: Deeper 'understanding' that strengthens ties

## CNN

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By: Allison Chinchar and Jennifer Gray

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## ENERGY MIX

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By Mitchell Beer

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Representatives passed the country's \$370-billion climate and clean energy plan and sent it to President Joe Biden's desk for signature.

## **EURONEWS**

### **Foul-smelling seaweed covers pristine Caribbean beaches - is climate change to blame?**

By Maeve Campbell

Millions of tons of brown seaweed has washed up along Mexico's beaches this summer and it's putting the country's post-COVID travel boom at risk.

## **PANAY NEWS**

### **Philippine economy: Firing on all cylinders**

By Manny B. Villar Jr.

The 7.4-percent expansion of the Philippine economy in the second quarter of the year came as no surprise to me. Robust corporate earnings in the April-to-June period, a booming travel sector and energetic consumers visiting and dining in the malls are telltale signs that the economy is powering through the headwinds.

## **PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

### **China factories ration power as heatwave sends demand soaring**

By Agence France-Presse

Chinese lithium hub Sichuan province will ration electricity supply to factories until Saturday, state media reported, as a heatwave sends power demands soaring and dries up reservoirs.

### **Lawyers denounce terror financing case vs 'rights defenders'**

By John Eric Mendoza

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## **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

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By Kris Crismundo

The Peninsula Electric Cooperative, Inc. (PENELCO) has diversified its power sources to be distributed in its franchise areas, now tapping solar power through a unit of renewable energy firm Alternergy Holdings Corp.

## **RED HOT NEWS/ REUTERS**

### **UN selects former Grenada minister as climate chief**

WASHINGTON (REUTERS, AFP) - Grenada's former Climate Resilience Minister Simon Stiell will become the new United Nations climate chief, UN Secretary-General António Guterres announced on Monday (Aug 16).

## **SUNSTAR**

### **[OPINION] Espinoza: Climate change and the politicians**

By Elias Espinoza

Climate change is no longer a fairy tale, or theory, but it is a fact and a reality that our and the future generation will have to face its dire consequences if our political leaders put a premium on playing politics instead of taking care of our environment by strictly enforcing the environmental laws, or crafting new laws that would enhance the existing laws that protect our environment. The signs are clear that our climate has changed a lot. Scientists put the blame on people and business entrepreneurs' lack of concern for the environment because human activities have resulted in high emission of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.

## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **DoST to focus on agri, food security**

By Kaithreen Cruz

Newly installed Science and Technology chief Dr. Renato Solidum Jr. aims to refocus the plans of the Department of Science and Technology (DoST) to align with the economic agenda of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.

### **PH, France eyeing more projects**

By Tiziana Celine Piatos

The Philippines and France are eyeing to extend cooperation over a wide range of economic and social initiatives, such as agriculture and climate change, according to the Department of Finance.

## **THE KOREA HERALD**

### **PM urges new disaster response system to cope with climate change**

By Yonhap

Prime Minister Han Duck-soo on Tuesday called for a new disaster response system to cope with climate change, as the heaviest rainfall in decades battered Seoul and its surrounding areas last week.

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **45 Years of EU-ASEAN: Deeper 'understanding' that strengthens ties**

By Nillicent Bautista, Matthew Dave Jucom and Dawn Danielle Solano

An enhanced relationship between the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU) has been a product of years of hard work, maturity and understanding, experts noted on the 45th anniversary of the two blocs' ties.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

**CNN**

**One-third of the food we eat is at risk because the climate crisis is endangering butterflies and bees**

By: Allison Chinchar and Jennifer Gray

Bee populations are declining. More than half of the bat species in the United States are in severe decline or listed as endangered. And international scientists recently announced the monarch butterfly is perilously close to extinction.

What these three creatures have in common is that they are all pollinators. Without them, fruits, vegetables and other plants wouldn't be pollinated, and that's a major problem for our food supply. "One out of every three bites of food that we eat" is directly connected to a pollinator, Ron Magill, the communications director and a wildlife expert at Zoo Miami, told CNN. Around 30% of the food that ends up on our tables gets there because of things like butterflies, bees and bats.

Losing those critical populations could also mean losing some of our favorite foods. Apples, melons, cranberries, pumpkins, squash, broccoli and almonds are among the foods most susceptible to the pollinator decline, according to the Food and Drug Administration. Bees, in particular, are responsible for pollinating around 90 commercially produced crops, the agency reports. Even tequila is at risk.

"It's all so intricately connected, whether you're eating the food that is directly pollinated or you're eating something that depends on that pollinator," Magill said. "It's a domino effect."

In other words, if you are eating fried chicken or pork chops, those chickens and pigs eat fruit, vegetables and other plants that depend on pollinators. And the climate crisis has taken a toll on pollinators. While more intense and prolonged drought is the most obvious impact, a growing concern is the effect of extreme heat -- particularly on butterflies.

"Because butterflies are some of the most sensitive insects to changes in temperature, they are considered the 'canary in the coal mine' when it comes to climate change," Magill said.

Warmer temperatures cause plants to bloom sooner, which is out of sync with when the butterflies lay their eggs and metamorphose. This will mean the flowers they depend on for food will have already bloomed out, leaving little for the butterflies to feed on, which will in turn greatly impact their ability to reproduce and survive.

It snowballs into a cyclical problem where the butterflies can't get the food they need to reproduce, nor can the plants get pollinated -- causing both to suffer greatly.

Also, for butterflies like monarchs that are known for long migrations from the Northern US to Mexico -- food along their route may no longer be available at the time that the natural migration takes place.

A UN report in 2019 found that a million species are at risk of extinction in the coming decades, as the climate crisis accelerates. Magill says we're starting to see that play out in insect populations.

"One million species in the next 50 years," Magill said. "That is catastrophic."

#### Human impact on natural pollinators

Scientists at the the International Union for Conservation of Nature last month added the monarch butterfly -- one of the world's most popular and recognizable insects -- to its red list of endangered species, noting that the destruction of its habitat and rising temperatures fueled by the climate crisis are increasingly threatening the species.

"Climate change has significantly impacted the migratory monarch butterfly and is a fast-growing threat; drought limits the growth of milkweed and increases the frequency of catastrophic wildfires, temperature extremes trigger earlier migrations before milkweed is available, while severe weather has killed millions of butterflies," scientists reported. Honeybees began to show an alarming decline in 2006. From April 2020 to April 2021, beekeepers in the US lost around 45% of their colonies, according to Auburn University's College of Agriculture, which reports that the average acceptable turnover is around 20%. Climate change may be amplifying a deadly parasite in honeybee populations. Research has showed that those bee-killing parasites become more prevalent in warmer climates which means as temperatures continue to rise the parasites could flourish and become catastrophic for bees.

Several countries and even some states in the US are already moving to help protect these crucial species. California is pushing to restrict bee-killing pesticides. Magill noted that while these declines are happening gradually, they will eventually be too great for ecosystems to overcome -- like a tipping point beyond which some species will be lost forever.

"You know, what is the straw that is going to break the camel's back when it comes to the balance of the environment?" Magill said.

#### Tequila at risk

Bats also play an irreplaceable role in food security. The USDA points to recent studies which estimate that bats eat enough pests to save more than \$1 billion per year in crop damage and pesticide costs in the United States, mostly from the corn industry alone. "Across all agricultural production, consumption of insect pests by bats results in a savings of more than \$3 billion per year," according to the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Bats are also vital pollinators.

"You wouldn't have tequila if you had no bats, because that's the only thing that pollinates the agave plant that makes tequila," Magill said. Bats are affected by the climate crisis in the same way butterflies and bees are.

"Bats are also more susceptible to heat stress," Magill said. "There have been major die-offs of bats as a result of rising temperatures that led to death from heat stroke as bats have limited cooling mechanisms."

Unlike butterflies and bees, though, bats aren't just a vital pollinator -- they are considered a major seed disperser and critical for our ecosystems, much like birds.

"The seeds from the fruits that they eat germinate after going through their digestive system and then are deposited throughout their range to 'plant' future trees," Magill said.

How you can help

This is a global problem which means fixes need to be on a global scale, but there are still ways individual people can help.

"Plant gardens with native wildlife, the native plants that are critical to the survival of these animals," Magill said.

Plants that are native will also require less care. If you plant a cactus in Louisiana, it's not going to do well in the humid environment. Likewise, impatiens or begonias will not do well in the desert Southwest as they require a tremendous amount of water to flourish. A new online database helps users in the UK find pollinator friendly plants for their gardens, and support biodiversity. Similar lists of native, pro-pollinator plants exist for the United States.

"When you plant native wildflowers, you're planting a buffet for the wildlife that needs that to survive," Magill says. "That's the refueling stations for our pollinators." Magill points to Lady Bird Johnson's effort to beautify roadsides in the US. While her goal was nationwide, her efforts shone in Texas.

"She did such a wonderful thing with wildflowers in Texas," Magill says. "There are times you can drive through Texas, and you can see wildflowers for as far as the eyes can see, and it's such a beautiful sight, because she understood the value of that."

While other states are doing that along roadways as well, individual homeowners can also do the same.

"We have beautiful plant life in our native areas where we live in this country. If we could focus more on that and start rebuilding what was naturally here, we can start bringing back those natural rhythms."

You can also work to reduce your pesticide and chemical use around your home. Good alternatives include using organic products such as compost for soil health and adding beneficial insects like ladybugs, praying mantises, or even nematodes to keep pests away.

## ENERGY MIX

### **Historic Climate Bill Passes U.S. House, Goes to Biden for Signature**

By: Mitchell Beer

U.S. climate hawks declared victory, Congressional Democrats got credit for a newly pragmatic approach to climate action, community campaigners demanded more ambitious action, and attention shifted to implementation after the U.S. House of Representatives passed the country's \$370-billion climate and clean energy plan and sent it to President Joe Biden's desk for signature.

Friday's historic vote "comes 34 years after a top scientist grabbed headlines warning Congress about the dangers of global warming," The Associated Press reports. "In the decades since, there have been 308 weather disasters that have each cost the nation at least US\$1 billion, the record for the hottest year has been broken 10 times, and wildfires have burned an area larger than Texas."

After trying and repeatedly failing to regulate carbon emissions directly, Congressional supporters of the Inflation Reduction Act hope "to make clean energy so cheap in all aspects of life that it's nearly irresistible," AP adds. "The crux of the long-delayed bill, singularly pushed by Democrats in a closely divided Congress, is to use incentives to spur investors to accelerate the expansion of clean energy such as wind and solar power, speeding the transition away from the oil, coal, and gas that largely cause climate change."

"This legislation is a true game-changer. It will create jobs, lower costs, increase U.S. competitiveness, reduce air pollution," said Climate Reality Project founder and former U.S. vice president Al Gore. "The momentum that will come out of this legislation cannot be underestimated."

"We need to celebrate this massive movement forward," said Congressional Progressive Caucus Chair Pramila Jayapal (D-WA). "We're not taking our foot off the gas."

Dan Lashof, U.S. director at the Washington-based World Resources Institute, reiterated earlier analysis showing that the bill will put the country within reach of meeting its Paris agreement promise to cut emissions 50 to 52% from 2005 levels by 2030. He said the plan will save the average U.S. household \$500 per year in energy bills, create more than nine million job-years of employment, reduce pollution in "overburdened" and often racialized communities, prevent 4,000 premature deaths per year by reducing pollution, and deliver tax credits or rebates for electric vehicles, heat pumps, home electricity upgrades, and residential solar.

Canary Media has been digging into the details of the support the bill delivers for energy storage, solar, home electrification, decarbonized air travel, clean postal delivery trucks, environmental justice, and a U.S. manufacturing base for solar, wind, and batteries.

“This is HUGE,” tweeted Rep. Sean Casten (D-IL), who worked as a renewable energy executive before entering Congress in 2019. “The Inflation Reduction Act includes \$300 billion to fight climate change, the largest federal clean energy investment in U.S. history. Let’s get this bill to the President’s desk.”

The Washington Post’s Steven Mufson has a long read on how drastically the politics of U.S. climate legislation have changed since the last failed attempt in 2010—and how Democrats have kept up.

“Last time, it sought to cap greenhouse gas emissions, and the fossil fuel industry fought back hard. Not this time,” Mufson writes. “Last time, some Republicans supported the measure, harking to an era when environmental protection was not so polarizing. Not this time.”

And “whereas President Jimmy Carter once pushed clean energy as a matter of personal, moral responsibility, the new bill treats climate change as a pragmatic pocketbook matter of consumer rebates and corporate tax incentives,” at a time when climate change is “a constant presence in shaping weather patterns, the economy, and daily life in much of the world, especially during the harsh summer months.”

“Democrats are advancing their climate bill with no Republican support, and their program is one of carrots, not sticks,” agreed Inside Climate News, in a story published hours before the House vote. “The idea is that an unprecedented \$370 billion federal investment in clean energy—largely in the form of tax credits to encourage its development, as opposed to taxes on carbon to discourage use of fossil fuels—will be the push that transforms not only the economy but the politics of climate change.”

But while the bill is a “once in a generation victory” for the “septuagenarian lawmakers” who wrote it [albeit with leadership from decades-younger staffers] and the 79-year-old president who’s about to sign it into law, “younger Democrats and climate activists crave more,” the New York Times reports. “They look at the bill as a down payment, and they worry a complacent electorate will believe Washington has at last solved climate change — when in fact scientists warn it has only taken the first necessary steps.”

“This bill is not the bill that my generation deserves and needs to fully avert climate catastrophe, but it is the one that we can pass, given how much power we have at this moment,” said Sunrise Movement co-founder Varshini Prakash.

“We are very clear that it took so long because our Congress and Senate doesn’t look like the American people,” added NextGen America President Christina Tzintzun Ramirez. “The climate crisis is going to unfold on the majority of young people. Most of these congressional representatives will be dead by the time we face the consequences of their inaction.”

In an August 7 letter to members of Congress, Ramirez and about 50 other youth leaders reminded legislators that “your work is not finished.”

But for now, the focus of that work has shifted to implementation, with countless decisions at every level of government, industry, and civil society set to determine how much the legislation achieves. Venture capital investors are confident that the bill will “prime the pump” for a new generation of clean energy start-ups, BNN Bloomberg reports. State governments, on the other hand, may take the options and opportunities in the bill in different directions, The Huffington Post states, with some proportion of their decisions driven more by ideology than by the realities of the climate emergency—or even the massive opportunities in the transition off carbon.

“Federal funding can only go so far in a country where a patchwork of jurisdictions and slow-moving bureaucracies rarely align on the need to quickly construct large-scale clean energy projects,” writes HuffPo’s Alexander Kaufman. “Should a power plant owner build a gas-fired plant with carbon capture technology or go with renewables? Public service commissioners and regional grid operators will decide. Key permitting requirements? Various state regulatory agencies are in charge there. Can transmission lines or pipelines pass through a tract of rural land? County officials will choose whether to rezone the property.”

“Whether or not you have tens of billions of dollars in federal incentives, unless the state utility commission decides it wants to deploy more zero-carbon resources, it’s not going to happen,” Tyler Norris, a North Carolina-based renewable energy developer and co-chair of the Clean Power Suppliers Association, told Kaufman.

And with Republican states like Oklahoma, Texas, and West Virginia leading the charge against national climate action, “I do think you’ll see some of the fossil fuel states chip away at it in terms of what happens at the state level,” added Rich Sorkin, CEO of the climate risk consultancy Jupiter Intelligence.

“Everyone is taking it as gospel that the bill will reduce emissions by 40% by 2030,” tweeted Neil Chatterjee, former chair of the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. “But EVERYTHING would have to [go] right: cooperation from Republican governors and legislatures—and possibly Republican Congresses and Presidents. Without R buy-in, that cooperation won’t come.”

Analysts are also pointing to this moment as a wake-up call for Canada.

“Suddenly, Canada is no longer the undisputed leader among North American countries in confronting climate change,” writes Globe and Mail climate columnist Adam Radwanski. The Inflation Reduction Act “is great news for the planet, as the world’s second-biggest polluter (after China) has gone a long way toward shedding its environmental laggard status,” he adds. “Whether it’s also great news for Canada, in terms of this country’s ability to compete economically in a decarbonizing world, will hinge significantly on whether Ottawa proves able to match Washington’s newfound urgency.”

“When the Americans get moving, they get moving really fast, and so we need to hold pace,” agreed Simon Fraser University energy economist Chris Bataille. “We often operate under the illusion that we’re separate because we operate under different jurisdictions, different legal systems, and different labour laws. But when it comes to the nuts and bolts of parts being made and the services we provide, we’re highly integrated.”

## EURONEWS

### **Foul-smelling seaweed covers pristine Caribbean beaches - is climate change to blame?**

By: Maeve Campbell

Millions of tons of brown seaweed has washed up along Mexico's beaches this summer and it's putting the country's post-COVID travel boom at risk.

It gives a brown tint to crystal clear waters and emits a sewage-like stench when it washes ashore, according to the University of South Florida.

There were 24.2 million tons recorded in the last month in the Caribbean region, up from 18.8 million tons in May. Near record amounts of this seaweed have been smothering coastlines in the region from Puerto Rico to Barbados.

In Mexico, the boom in sargassum poses a "significant threat" to the country's post-pandemic tourism recovery, analysts from bank BBVA warn. Particularly in Quintana Roo state, home to destinations like Cancun, Tulum and Playa del Carmen. Mexico's Navy and local workers have been drafted in to remove it from the water and sand.

"The sargassum is not a problem that can be solved, but must constantly be addressed, mainly in the summer months," BBVA said on Monday.

Mexico's GDP from tourism took a 25 per cent hit in real terms in 2020 due to the pandemic, even though the country never closed its borders. In 2021, however, the sector rebounded to near pre-pandemic levels - but the upward trajectory is in danger unless the seaweed is controlled.

Researchers blame multiple factors for the increased levels of sargassum - including climate change, human sewage, fertilisers being washed from Brazil's rivers into the Atlantic Ocean and dust blowing west from Africa's Sahara Desert.

Is seaweed a problem anywhere else?

The sargassum occurs naturally and usually appears in the region in March. As the waters warm through summer, it creates the perfect conditions for propagation meaning levels typically increase.

But, since 2011, seaweed in Mexico and across the Caribbean has exploded for reasons scientists do not yet fully understand.

Belize has recently seen an uptick in sargassum seaweed polluting its beaches too. The locations where high concentrations are particularly bad are Hopkins and Placencia in the south of the country.

We spoke to Laura McMullen, a sustainability consultant in the UK, who was on holiday in Caye Caulker in Belize in May 2022.

“There was this strange seaweed washing up all over the Mesoamerican reef,” she tells Euronews Green.

“There was some of it last year but [locals have] never seen it this bad. It’s washing up on all the islands. It then decomposes and it has a really bad smell. They’re trying to get rid of it but it’s growing so much more because of climate change - the temperatures are much higher and the seas are much warmer.

“It’s impacting scuba diving, tourism, everything,” says Laura.

How are local businesses tackling the seaweed problem?

Hotel chains and restaurants along the beaches in Mexico and Belize have created task forces of dozens of island workers to try and deal with it.

They try to keep their areas clean for customers, but public beaches are overwhelmed by the expansive seaweed carpets.

Belize’s San Pedro Town Council announced in March that it would spend around \$20,000 (€19,454) every year to rid the beaches of seaweed.

Other beaches in the region have invested in a range of measures including floating barriers, giant pumps and nets that catch the sargassum before it reaches the shore. It can then be collected by boats and some countries like Jamaica are even looking into ways it can be processed and used.

The government in the Dominican Republic invested in a barrier to block the seaweed from reaching the beach in 2020. It now stretches 12.7 kilometres along the Bavaro beachfront but this is just 40 per cent of its total length.

If climate change and pollution mean this seaweed problem is the new normal, the Caribbean will have to invest in more ways to keep its beaches clean.

## PANAY NEWS

### **Philippine economy: Firing on all cylinders**

By Manny B. Villar Jr.

The 7.4-percent expansion of the Philippine economy in the second quarter of the year came as no surprise to me. Robust corporate earnings in the April-to-June period, a booming travel sector and energetic consumers visiting and dining in the malls are telltale signs that the economy is powering through the headwinds.

The easing of mobility restrictions, of course, allowed more businesses to resume operations and rehire employees displaced at the outset of the pandemic. The 7.4-percent growth in the gross domestic product in Q2 is a strong follow-up to the revised 8.2-percent expansion in the first quarter.

The Philippines now has registered five straight quarters of growth—clear proof that the economy has overcome the pandemic. The growth may have slowed down from the first-quarter expansion but base effects simply explain the reduced pace. The economy expanded at a faster rate of 12.1 percent during the comparative period last year.

Also restraining the economic momentum in the second quarter was the surge in global commodity prices, led by petroleum products. The war between Russia and Ukraine and the lockdowns in China disrupted the global supply chain, leading to spiraling costs of commodity prices not only in Asia, but also in Europe and North America.

Another factor is the sluggish performance of the agriculture and fisheries sector, which remained vulnerable to climate change. Agriculture grew just 0.2 percent in the second quarter, compared with the 6.3-percent and 9.1-percent expansion of the industry and services sectors, respectively.

The government, however, is doing its best to improve the farm sector, with no less than President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. heading the Department of Agriculture to give it the attention and assistance it deserves.

Nevertheless, we have the second fastest-growing economy among members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The Philippines was the second best-performing nation among the region's major emerging economies, next to Vietnam, which grew 7.7 percent in the second quarter. More importantly, we achieved the growth rate while other bigger economies struggled. China, for example, announced a meager growth of 0.4 percent in the quarter.

The country's growth averaged 7.8 percent in the first half, or above the government's target range of 6.5 percent to 7.5 percent. This impressive feat means more Filipinos are finding jobs. The unemployment rate, per the report of the Philippine Statistics Authority, eased to 6 percent in June from 7.7 percent a year ago, with more than 1.5 million Filipinos joining the labor force this year.

The economy, though, is not living up to its full potential. We should pursue the full reopening of the economy, including the resumption of in-person classes, to enable our young learners, particularly those in Grades 1 to 3, to catch up with their lessons. The two-year closure of schools has adversely affected the literacy and reading comprehension of public school students in age group 7 to 9.

The vaccination program will play a crucial role in the resumption of onsite classes. We should consider putting up vaccination sites in schools to make sure Filipino learners are protected and educated well.

I am also hoping that inflation will settle within the government's target range of 2 percent to 4 percent in the third and fourth quarters, so that more poor households will feel the benefit of the expanding economy. Our biggest challenge, though, remains the rising inflation rate, which is being caused by overseas developments.

President Marcos, fortunately, is addressing the problem of rising food prices head-on. To combat inflation and protect consumers, it is imperative that we ensure food security and reduce transport and logistics costs. Investing in agriculture and more infrastructure projects will bolster food production.

Price stability is the key to making economic growth more relevant and inclusive. Taming the inflation rate will prevent an erosion of the consumers' purchasing power. I believe we will attain faster GDP growths in the coming years if we keep inflation within target and decide to fully reopen the economy.

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

### **China factories ration power as heatwave sends demand soaring**

By Agence France-Presse

Chinese lithium hub Sichuan province will ration electricity supply to factories until Saturday, state media reported, as a heatwave sends power demands soaring and dries up reservoirs.

Temperatures in the province — home to nearly 84 million people — have hovered above 40-42 degrees Celsius (104-108 degrees Fahrenheit) since last week, according to data from China's Meteorological Administration, increasing the demand for air conditioning.

The region relies on dams to generate 80 percent of its electricity, but rivers in the area have dried up this summer, Beijing's Water Resources Ministry said.

The province in China's southwest produces half the nation's lithium, used in batteries for electric vehicles, and its hydropower projects provide electricity to industrial hubs along the country's east coast.

But the local government has decided to prioritize residential power supply, ordering industrial users in 19 out of 21 cities in the province to suspend production until Saturday, according to a notice issued Sunday.

Several companies including aluminium producer Henan Zhongfu Industrial and fertilizer producers Sichuan Meifeng Chemical Industry said in stock exchange statements they were suspending production.

A plant operated by Taiwanese giant and Apple supplier Foxconn in the province has also suspended production, Taipei's Central News Agency reported.

Some companies will be permitted to operate at a limited capacity, depending on their production needs.

"Sources estimate at least 1,200 tons of lithium output will be cut due to the operations disruptions in these five days," Susan Zou, an analyst at Rystad Energy, told AFP, adding the cost of lithium carbonate had jumped since Monday.

A summer of extreme weather in China has seen multiple major cities record their hottest days ever.

China's national observatory reissued a red alert for high temperatures on Monday, state media reported, as the mercury soared past 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) across swathes of the country.

Provinces including Zhejiang, Jiangsu and Anhui that rely on power from western China have also issued electricity curbs for industrial users to ensure homes had enough power, according to local media reports.

Scientists say extreme weather across the world has become more frequent due to climate change, and will likely grow more intense as global temperatures rise.

## **Lawyers denounce terror financing case vs 'rights defenders'**

By John Eric Mendoza

Financing terrorism is a “dangerous accusation” against the 16 individuals, four of them nuns, who were indicted on Monday for allegedly violating the Terrorism Financing Prevention and Suppression Act of 2022.

The Union of Peoples’ Lawyers in Mindanao (UPLM) issued the statement on Tuesday, saying the nonbailable offense of providing funds to the Communist Party of the Philippines and New Peoples’ Army (CPP-NPA) was “aimed at suppressing and harassing human rights defenders.”

The nuns are members of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines in the Northern Mindanao Region (RPM-NMR).

On Monday, the Department of Justice said that “probable cause exists to indict 16 respondents for making funds available” to the CPP-NPA.

The offense carries a penalty of up to 40 years of imprisonment and a fine that ranges from P500,000 to P1 million.

The UPLM calls itself a “staunch ally” of the RMP-NMR for its “defense and assertion of the rights of the rural poor communities in the face of development aggression, climate change, and sectoral discrimination.”

The group pointed out that the projects of the RMP-NMR had gone through the “rigorous processes of selection, monitoring and auditing by its respective donors, such as the European Union, the United Nations, and many others.”

## **PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY**

### **Firm to supply renewable energy in Bataan**

By: Kris Crismundo

MANILA – The Peninsula Electric Cooperative, Inc. (PENELCO) has diversified its power sources to be distributed in its franchise areas, now tapping solar power through a unit of renewable energy firm Alternergy Holdings Corp.

In a statement Tuesday, Alternergy said its subsidiary Solana Solar Alpha, Inc. has signed a power supply agreement (PSA) with PENELCO to supply 10 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy from the proposed Solana solar power project in Hermosa, Bataan.

Solana Solar will start to supply clean energy to PENELCO by the middle of 2023, with a long-term contract of 20 years.

“We are excited to partner with PENELCO. The Solana solar project is a long-term and sustainable strategy for PENELCO in securing its power supply requirements,” Alternergy president Gerry Magbanua said.

Magbanua said this partnership supports the goal of President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. to harness indigenous energy sources.

“The renewable power from the Solana solar project will reduce PENELCO’s dependence on power supply using imported fossil fuels,” he said.

In 2021, PENELCO’s peak demand reached 119 MW, with a projected growth demand of 4.4 percent annually.

PENELCO also estimates that sourcing power from the Solana solar power project in Hermosa will give the distribution utility an annual savings of PHP90 million.

## **RED HOT NEWS/ REUTERS**

### **UN selects former Grenada minister as climate chief**

WASHINGTON (REUTERS, AFP) - Grenada's former Climate Resilience Minister Simon Stiell will become the new United Nations climate chief, UN Secretary-General António Guterres announced on Monday (Aug 16).

Stiell will take over as Executive Secretary of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) with under three months before the latest round of climate negotiations at COP27 in Egypt. He will replace Mexican diplomat Patricia Espinosa.

Stiell served for five years as Grenada's Minister for Climate Resilience and the Environment until June 2022 and previously served as Minister for Education and Human Resource Development.

The UN called Stiell a "true champion for formulating creative approaches for our collective global response to the climate crisis" in a statement.

Stiell has been a prominent figure at UN climate negotiations, often calling for the world's largest polluters to set more ambitious climate goals and to deliver finance promised to vulnerable countries, including small island nations.

That funding is key to preparing for future climate impacts including extreme temperatures, rising sea levels, more frequent storms and drought.

Stiell told Reuters in an interview last year that the G-20 group of the world's most powerful countries "generate 80 per cent of global emissions and constitute 85 per cent of global GDP. They have the wealth and technology to act."

Espinosa served two terms as head of the UNFCCC, from 2016 until July.

Until Stiell steps into the post, Mauritanian Ibrahim Thiaw remains in place as interim head of UN Climate Change, in addition to his duties as leader of the UN agency that combats desertification.

## SUNSTAR

### **[OPINION] Espinoza: Climate change and the politicians**

By: Elias Espinoza

Climate change is no longer a fairy tale, or theory, but it is a fact and a reality that our and the future generation will have to face its dire consequences if our political leaders put a premium on playing politics instead of taking care of our environment by strictly enforcing the environmental laws, or crafting new laws that would enhance the existing laws that protect our environment. The signs are clear that our climate has changed a lot. Scientists put the blame on people and business entrepreneurs' lack of concern for the environment because human activities have resulted in high emission of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.

I can still recall in my younger days in my hometown that during the dry season, particularly in the months of March, April and May, we experienced searing heat on sunny days, and there was neither a single drop of rain nor a tropical storm that visited us. Rain would only come during the month of July and in the "ber" months, the wet season months. I cannot imagine that in the USA a severe flooding hit Kentucky that several lives and properties were lost but, on the other hand, fires ate up several acres of forest land in California. Older and cynical people may call these events mysterious, if not wrath from God and a warning to the nonbelievers. But scientists say these events are products of humans' utter neglect of the environment.

Who would ever think that in April this year, considered the hottest month in the country as we Catholics celebrate the Holy Week, Tropical Storm Agaton hit Eastern Visayas, leaving untold damage and death. The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council reported that 75 people lost their lives as a consequence of floods and mudslides brought about by the heavy rainfall from Typhoon Agaton while 298 people were reported missing.

In the past weeks, we have experienced downpours so that some areas of Cebu City, particularly the low-lying areas, were inundated, and all that we could do was pray for good weather and urge the government leaders to act on what is necessary in preventing calamities like flood. The national government has provided the local government units prone to floods with the flood control projects, and Cebu City is one of the recipients. But the removal of the illegal structures of informal settlers along the city's waterways was stalled during the May 9, 2022 polls.

Some of the victims of the recent flash floods due to the sudden heavy rains were the informal settlers along the prohibited areas in Kinalumsan River in Cebu City. It is not too late for the city government to transfer the informal settlers along this river to safer areas and demolish the illegal structures. And who is being blamed for the disaster? The city officials for their lackadaisical actions hindered by their lack of political will.

Big structures built by influential businessmen along or on top of the city's waterways are still there despite the aggressive efforts of the previous city administration to remove these illegal structures that come with a threat of bringing to court the owners.

Cebu City Mayor Mike Rama has exhibited political will in some of his executive actions, especially now that he's dreamed of making Cebu City a Singapore-like city. But for Mayor Rama to fulfill his dream, he has to act like Singapore's first prime minister, Lee Kuan Yew. Impose the laws and city ordinances without fear or favor to make the city clean, tidy and orderly.

## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **DoST to focus on agri, food security**

By Kaithreen Cruz

Newly installed Science and Technology chief Dr. Renato Solidum Jr. aims to refocus the plans of the Department of Science and Technology (DoST) to align with the economic agenda of President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.

He said that in the next six years, his department will prioritize programs in agriculture and food security, transportation, renewable energy, health and job creation.

Solidum assured the public that the DoST will continue delivering services that will benefit Filipinos while working closely with other government agencies and addressing the problems of their respective stakeholders.

"When we think about science, technology, and innovation, it cut across all sectors. The DoST has service and research and development (R&D) institutions that could provide innovative and timely solutions to the challenges faced by the various sectors and areas in the country," he added.

In the area of agriculture and food security, Solidum said that research efforts are being conducted by R&D institutions to enhance the sector's post-harvest, value-chain and food processing capabilities.

For transportation, the DoST is also working with local government units (LGUs) and educational institutions for project implementation of hybrid and electronic vehicles such as the Hybrid Electric Road Train and e-Scooters in Cauayan City in Isabela and the Hybrid Trimaran with the Aklan State University.

The Niche Centers for R&D (Nicer) for Advanced Batteries also has an ongoing initiative, in partnership with the academe, to boost renewable energy efforts.

On health, Solidum was keen on providing support, especially amid the global health pandemic, by lobbying for the creation of the Virology Institute of the Philippines (VIP), as mentioned by Marcos in his first State of the Nation Address (SONA) last July.

To boost livelihood and employment programs, DoST also aims to sustain its banner program for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), the Small Enterprise Technology Upgrading Program (Setup).

"[Setup] has been there for the local businesses in the regions for past decades, providing funding assistance to acquire equipment and technologies that would improve its overall production and operation and technical knowledge to ensure the quality and safety of their products," the S&T chief shared.

Moreover, Solidum plans to improve the services of Phivolcs and the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) by improving the capabilities of our forecasters, geologists and volcanologists and adding equipment and facilities to deal with natural hazards.

DoST also assured continuous provision of scholarship opportunities for science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) students at the secondary, undergraduate, graduate and PhD levels to enable the country to increase the pool of highly dedicated and competent local scientists and engineers.

He emphasized that a whole-of-nation approach — through partnerships with government partners, private organizations, and the academe — would create solutions that are relevant and innovative, which, in turn, will fill the gaps of all sectors and communities to achieve inclusive development.

Prior to his appointment as DoST chief, Solidum was the Undersecretary for Scientific and Technical Services and officer-in-charge of the Philippine Institute for Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs). He has served the DoST for 38 years.

He has also received numerous awards including the Presidential Citation for Public Service, the Presidential Lingkod Bayan (Civil Servant) Award by the Civil Service Commission, the Excellence Award for Government Service by the Philippine Federation of Professional Associations, the Presidential Career Executive Service Award by the Career Executive Service Board, and the Professional of the Year in the field of Geology by the Professional Regulation Commission, among others.

## **PH, France eyeing more projects**

By Tiziana Celine Piatos

The Philippines and France are eyeing to extend cooperation over a wide range of economic and social initiatives, such as agriculture and climate change, according to the Department of Finance.

"We have many projects in the pipeline with France in the areas of infrastructure, maritime security, disaster risk management, agriculture, green energy, education and climate change," Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno said following a meeting with the French Ambassador to the Philippines Michèle Boccoz.

"I also encouraged French companies to invest in the [Philippines], especially now that we have amended the almost century-old Public Service Act, which opened up public services to 100-percent foreign ownership," he added.

He mentioned that the French government is engaged in several agriculture-related projects in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Some local agriculture initiatives, such as the production of rice and dairy products, are also being led by French businesses.

The Finance department also mentioned that a team of specialists from France is traveling to the Philippines to research the outbreak of African swine fever.

For his part, Boccoz raised the prospect of establishing alliances in waste management, green energy and biodiversity.

The French ambassador also cited examples of private sector-led technology initiatives to produce fertilizers and green energy from waste. Also, France has extensive experience in nuclear energy.

Boccoz also told Diokno that about 120 French companies are currently operating in the Philippines in the construction, logistics, business process outsourcing, shipping, water engineering services and subway construction industries.

Also, French businesses will visit the Philippines in October to meet several local business communities and officials of the Department of Trade and Industry, and Diokno requested Boccoz that France assist local government units (LGUs) for projects through the public-private partnership arrangement.

The Disaster Risk Reduction Enhancement at the Local Level Program, known as DRREALL, is currently being funded by a 250-million-euro credit facility agreement from the French government's public development bank, Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency).

The project seeks to assist LGUs in taking on the responsibility for catastrophe risk reduction, management and climate action.

## THE KOREA HERALD

### **PM urges new disaster response system to cope with climate change**

By: Yonhap

Prime Minister Han Duck-soo on Tuesday called for a new disaster response system to cope with climate change, as the heaviest rainfall in decades battered Seoul and its surrounding areas last week.

"Due to climate change, unprecedented disasters have frequently occurred," Han told a Cabinet meeting, emphasizing the need to come up with a new response system to deal with natural disasters caused by climate change.

"In line with environmental changes, safety management standards must be drastically strengthened and boldly reorganized to effectively prepare for major disasters in the future," Han said.

The heaviest rainfall in 80 years swamped Seoul and its surrounding areas earlier last week, killing 14 people, with six people still missing.

Climate change has been cited as one of the key factors that caused the flooding, with a warming temperature more likely to cause the extreme weather.

Han also instructed relevant authorities to fully mobilize equipment and manpower for a swift recovery of areas damaged by the downpours.

The government has taken steps to designate areas that were hit by last week's heavy rains as a special disaster zone.

If designated, the rain-hit areas will be eligible for the government's financial support in recovery work, relief funds for victims and other benefits.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### **45 Years of EU-ASEAN: Deeper 'understanding' that strengthens ties**

By: Nillicent Bautista, Matthew Dave Jucom and Dawn Danielle Solano

Manila, Philippines — An enhanced relationship between the Association of the Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the European Union (EU) has been a product of years of hard work, maturity and understanding, experts noted on the 45th anniversary of the two blocs' ties.

Despite being “two very different animals” whose contrasts occasionally hinder region-to-region agreement, the ASEAN and the EU have grown to have a “deep” understanding of each other in the past four decades, observed Shada Islam, senior policy adviser to the European Policy Center.

“We were talking quite a lot at each other rather than to each other. It was a very different time from what it is now,” Islam said in video interview on Engage EU's website. “I think it required a certain degree of maturity and hard work by some very important people to get that understanding through,” she added.

Islam, who also teaches Asia-Europe relations at the College of Europe in Poland, said there has been a fundamental shift in how both regions see and perceive each other in the last 15 years. “The European Union became more humble, willing to be more accepting that the world is different from ourselves. And ASEAN became more confident in its geopolitical outreach. There was less hesitancy to talk about the differences in question,” she added.

Federica Mogherini, who served as the high representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, said regional forums and bilateral meetings with global ministers contributed to strengthening the ties between the ASEAN and EU. “I used all those meetings to push as much as I could for deepening relations between the European Union and ASEAN,” she said.

Mogherini, also a former vice president of the European Commission, explained that as partners, the two blocs have become “very good” at overcoming challenges as they are candid and open about it.

She said this openness is considered to be a good foundation for a “real friendship and partnership.”

“We were constructively finding ways to listen to each other, respect each other, and try to overcome the obstacle. I would say it worked with a little bit of creativity, I think we managed to overcome the bumps on the road,” Mogherini said.

ASEAN-EU and the youth

Bringing the youth into the global discussion is also among the shared goals of the two blocs, which have been providing platforms where young leaders can exchange ideas on issues that affect their future.

The ASEAN has “expanded the opportunities” for the youth to participate in policy-making and community development through the ASEAN Leaders’ Interface, ASEAN Youth Forum and ASEAN You-can AMME Dialogue on Youth for Climate Action.

The EU, meanwhile, put up the Youth Sounding Board (YSB) where tomorrow's leaders can bring up solutions and influence EU agenda on key social issues their respective countries are facing.

Benjie Allen Aquino from the Philippines said being a member of the YSB has given him a greater sense of responsibility to make sure concerns are addressed through feedback.

“I think the duty for us, the members of the Youth Sounding Board, is not just to make our voices heard, but to collect the feedback [and] experiences of those sectors that are not usually given a seat at the table,” Aquino said. For Rosario Manalo, dean of the Philippine Women’s University School of Diplomacy, the forums also shape future diplomats, who come to learn from older generations and, in turn, share what their ideas.

Mogherini shares the same hope for young participants of EU-ASEAN programs. “I’m very excited to see our young leaders coming together and reflecting together on the agenda of today and of tomorrow and I think it couldn’t be in better hands than in their hands,” she said.

Senja Mulia, the founder of the Asean Youth Organization from Indonesia, said building connections among the youth is necessary for developing future policy-makers.

“We connect to the youth with different backgrounds, and then they have a discussion, build a relationship, and build a good friendship. And at the end of the day, they become policy-makers [themselves],” Mulia said.

Aquino, meanwhile, hopes that the cross-generational and cross-cultural exchanges would elevate the youth's status in decisionmaking.

“I hope that us being young will be seen as an asset rather than a burden. Being young should be connected with empowerment [and] idealism. I hope that this becomes a trend and becomes more accepted practice in the ASEAN and EU,” he said.

Providing educational opportunities

Another fruit of the Southeast Asia-Europe partnership is how it allows occasions to make education have a much wider impact on individuals and institutions.

AYO founder Mulia saw how academic training and opportunities enabled through EU-ASEAN can fill gaps in the education sector. Southeast Asia, he explained, has long had

difficulty providing college graduates with sufficient employment. “The jobs out there are not really relevant with what they studied before,” he said. “In this regard, probably you can foster stronger relationship[s] within the ASEAN by providing platforms for the graduates.”

He suggests that the EU could provide ASEAN youth with scholarships, fellowships, exchange programs or internships where they can learn from the experts and counterparts.

Young Europeans can also be invited to any of the 10 Southeast Asian countries, Mulia said, "to learn about their culture, exchange ideas, brainstorm," which ways contributing to more sustainable bilateral relationships.

Ambassador-at-Large Tommy Koh saw in the young a common tendency to be “relatively free of prejudice”—a trait that can be used and enhanced through education programs.

“We should give them many opportunities to travel to study abroad to intern abroad to attend workshops, conferences, and symposia that people like us organize for them,” Koh said.

“I think if we do all this, you will find a new generation of young people in the EU and in ASEAN who will see each other with unprejudiced eyes who will see each other as equal brothers and sisters,” he added.

The EU is a development partner of ASEAN. Its development programs are mainly focused on higher education and student mobility, sustaining economic integration and trade, and EU-ASEAN policy dialogue in areas of joint interest, among others.

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