

1. Heat index in Zambales' Iba town soars to 53°C on April 28

MANILA, Philippines – The heat index in Iba, Zambales, reached a scorching 53°C on Sunday, April 28, the highest that the country's weather bureau has recorded so far for 2024.

The heat index, also called the feels-like temperature since it is the temperature perceived by the body, is measured using air temperature and relative humidity.

Here are the highest figures released by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) on Sunday:

At the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Pasay City and the PAGASA Science Garden in Quezon City, the heat index hit 43°C on Sunday.

PAGASA provides heat index figures daily. It classifies the figures based on potential effects on people's health:

27°C to 32°C – Caution

Fatigue is possible with prolonged exposure and activity.

Continuing activity could lead to heat cramps.

33°C to 41°C – Extreme Caution

Heat cramps and heat exhaustion are possible.

Continuing activity could lead to heat stroke.

42°C to 51°C – Danger

Heat cramps and heat exhaustion are likely.

Heat stroke is probable with continued exposure.

52°C and above – Extreme Danger

Heat stroke is imminent.

PAGASA Administrator Nathaniel Servando previously said on April 12 that “efforts are being made to improve the heat index monitoring and early warning system for the country.”

Classes have been suspended in various parts of the Philippines in recent weeks due to high heat index levels.

The excessive heat, along with a planned transport strike, also prompted the Department of Education to suspend face-to-face classes in all public schools from Monday to Tuesday, April 29 to 30.

Workers, like students, are affected by the heat too. The Department of Labor and Employment has urged employers to implement flexible work arrangements whenever possible.

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/weather/iba-zambales-philippines-pagasa-heat-index-april-28-2024/>

2. Philippines' warm and dry season starts at tail end of El Niño

MANILA, Philippines – The Philippines' warm and dry season for 2024 is underway, with hotter days ahead alongside the continued effects of the El Niño phenomenon.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) announced in a briefing on Friday, March 22, that the warm and dry season has begun.

Filipinos often call this season "summer," but the country only has two major seasons: rainy and dry. The dry season is further divided into two: cool and warm.

The start of the warm and dry season means the cool and dry season, which is characterized by the northeast monsoon or amihan, has ended. The northeast monsoon affected parts of the country from October 2023 to March 2024.

"The retreat of the high pressure area over Siberia indicates an apparent weakening of amihan. Furthermore, the strengthening of the North Pacific High has led to a gradual shift in the wind pattern from northeasterly to easterly and an increase in the air temperature over most parts of the country. These signify the end of the northeast monsoon...and the beginning of the warm and dry season," PAGASA explained in a statement on Friday.

The warm and dry season usually lasts until May. Temperatures are expected to rise during this period, with PAGASA issuing daily heat index figures.

"In the coming months, the number of dry and warm days across the country will continue to increase, although isolated thunderstorms are also likely to occur, usually in the afternoon or evening," the weather bureau said.

PAGASA Administrator Nathaniel Servando advised people to take extra precautions to prevent illnesses such as heat stress and heat stroke.

"Sa mga susunod na mga araw ay tataas ang temperatura. Kung kasabay ang mataas na alinsangan o relative humidity, mataas ang heat index, at may kaakibat ito na hazard o panganib sa ating health. Maiiwasan lamang ito kung sundin natin 'yung mga suggested interventions. Palaging mag-inom ng tubig, magdala ng payong, magsuot ng manipis na damit," he said.

(In the coming days, temperatures will rise. Combined with high relative humidity, that will result in a high heat index, which comes with hazards to our health. We can avoid these hazards by practicing suggested interventions. Always drink water, bring an umbrella, wear thin clothing.

<https://www.rappler.com/nation/weather/pagasa-declares-start-philippines-warm-dry-season-summer-march-2024/>

3. Expect more storms than previous year because of impending La Niña

MANILA, Philippines – The Philippines is expecting the onset of La Niña to result in more storms than the previous year, when there were only 11 tropical cyclones because of the El Niño phenomenon.

Ana Liza Solis, climate monitoring chief at the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), said on Tuesday, March 26, that their initial projection sees 13 to 16 typhoons by latter half of 2024.

It is important to note that this is still less than what the country experiences under normal conditions, typically averaging 20 tropical cyclones a year.

“During La Niña, we usually experience more typhoons because of warmer temperature of the ocean,” said Solis in a mix of Filipino and English.

<https://www.rappler.com/philippines/more-typhoons-than-previous-year-la-nina-2024/>

4. FACT CHECK: Bathing, drinking cold water safe in hot weather

Claim: A person exposed to hot weather should wait 30 minutes before bathing or washing body parts exposed to heat.

Rating: FALSE

Why we fact-checked this: The Facebook reel containing the claim has 14,400 reactions, 398 comments, and 12,000 shares as of writing.

The video lists things a person should do during a heat wave. Among its reminders: “Kapag umabot ang temperatura ng 38°C at galing ka sa labas, huwag kaagad maghugas ng kamay o paa, wag maghilamos o basain ang bahaging nabilad sa araw. Magpalipas ng di bababa sa 30 minuto o kalahating oras bago maghilamos o maligo.”

(When the temperature reaches 38° and you are coming from outdoors, do not immediately wash your hands, feet, face, or body parts exposed to the sun. Wait for at least 30 minutes or half an hour before washing or bathing.)

<https://www.rappler.com/newsbreak/fact-check/bathing-drinking-cold-water-safe-hot-weather/>