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DENR

IN THE NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Results on DENR audit on mining out Feb. 2

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said the final results on the audit of 30 mining companies that failed the initial audit conducted last year will be released by February 2.

Only 11 mining companies out of 41 passed the audit and the rest were either suspended or recommended for suspension for failing to meet environmental safety standards.

The 11 are Philex Mining Corp., Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corp., Atlas Consolidated Mining and Development Corp., Techiron Resources Inc., Cagdianao Mining Corp., Taganito Mining Corp., Platinum Group Metals Corp., Greenstone Resources Corp., Philsaga Mining Corp., Pacific Nickel Philippines, Inc. and Apex Mining Company Inc.

Regina Lopez, DENR secretary, had said that in auditing these mining companies, the agency will not just look at the technical side but also the social practices such as the effects of their operations

on the residents of the community, on bodies of water among others.

The audit team – composed of representatives from the DENR central and regional offices, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), Environmental Management Bureau, Biodiversity Management Bureau, Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau, the Department of Health, the Department of Agriculture and civil society organizations – focused on safety and health, mine environmental management, social development, mining tenement, Clean Air Act, Clean Water Act, hazardous waste, and solid waste.

Mario Luis Jacinto, DENR undersecretary and MGB concurrent director, assured stakeholders and investors of government support amidst uncertainties in the mining industry.

Speaking before participants of the Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corp. (JOGMEC) seminar on sustainable development of mineral resources,

Jacinto said government is keen on having all industries including mining contribute to the country's development.

"The challenge is to squarely address legitimate concerns; provide proper information to have a shared perspective of development options and patiently reason with oppositors to set aside unreasonable demands," Jacinto said in a statement.

He also assured investors government will study policies that would best position the country in the world minerals market while information sharing with the industry stakeholders will be pursued at every opportunity.

"Geological maps and reports, geo-hazard maps and studies and watershed maps already available will be provided to and analyzed with industry partners to have a common appreciation of the areas with potential for development and identify the elements at risk in the different areas," he said.

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BusinessMirror

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR expected to reveal mine-audit result on Feb. 2

By JONATHAN L. MAYUGA
@jonlmayuga

MINING'S big players under the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) continue to hold on to President Duterte's promise to weed out irresponsible mining while helping the industry grow to achieve its full economic potential through responsible mining.

This as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is set to announce the final mine-audit results on February 2.

The fate of 30 mining companies that failed the initial audit conducted by the DENR last year hangs in the balance, as the DENR tightens the screw on mining through a strict audit criteria that includes environmental, biodiversity and social considerations.

Ronald Recidoro, vice president of COMP, said this is the meat of the message delivered by Environment Undersecretary and Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Director Mario Luis Jacinto during the Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corp. (Jogmec) seminar on sustainable development of mineral resources at the New World Hotel in Makati City last Monday.

To recall, barely one week after she assumed office on July 1, Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez immediately ordered a review of all 41 operating metal mines in the country.

Based on the initial results released last September 27, only 11 mining companies "passed" the audit, with 10 mining operations slapped with suspension and 20 others facing possible suspension failing to meet environmental standards.

Among the major findings of the team were violations of the terms and conditions of the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) and Department Administrative Order (DAO) 2010-21, or the revised implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act (RA) 7942, otherwise known as the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, and DAO 200-98, which

The DENR chief, a passionate biodiversity advocate, is known for her large-scale mining. She vowed to come up with the result of the mining audit by the end of the month.

She said the DENR, headed by mining audit head and Mining and Geosciences Board Assistant Director Danilo Uykieng, is currently evaluating the reply and responses of the mining companies to the show-cause orders.

During his brief talk, Jacinto, a geologist and a consultant to several mining companies prior to being appointed by President Duterte, assured stakeholders and investors of the government support, despite the feeling of

uncertainty hounding the mining industry.

What the good DENR official wants to tell the industry is that President Duterte remains committed to responsible mining, Recidoro said.

No other DENR official, he added, understands the language of the minerals development sector better than Jacinto because of his experience as MGB official and consultant to mining companies in Mindanao for decades.

"For me, his assurance that only responsible mining will be allowed under the Duterte administration is very much welcome," Recidoro said.

He noted that Jacinto, during an earlier meeting with businessmen in Davao City last November, set four major criteria for mining to be allowed.

The criteria, which calls for mining projects to be environmentally, technically, financially and socially sound, only means that the government is serious in helping the industry grow and contribute to economic growth and development, Recidoro said.

Speaking during the Jogmec seminar, Jacinto stressed Duterte is keen on having all industries contribute to the country's development.

Guided by "real change with compassion", Jacinto said, "for a genuine and meaningful change in mineral resources

the Duterte administration, "responsible miners have nothing to fear."

"The challenge is to squarely address legitimate concerns, provide proper information to have a shared perspective of development options, and patiently reason with oppositors to set aside unreasonable demands," Jacinto said.

He added that host communities must be involved in environmental protection and enhancement programs—and must also have a sense of ownership of the social development plans in their respective communities.

Jacinto also assured investors of an environment conducive for business with government fighting crime, stopping corruption and working toward lasting peace.

According to Jacinto, the government will study policies to best position the country in the world minerals market while information sharing with the industry stakeholders will be pursued at every opportunity.

Geological maps and reports, geohazard maps and studies, and watershed maps already available will be provided to and analyzed with industry partners to have a common appreciation of the areas with potential for development and identify the elements at risk in the different areas, he said.

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BW FILE PHOTO

THE GOVERNMENT is set to release next week its final report and rulings on the metal mine audit.

Audit results for miners expected next week

THE government is set to release next week its final report and rulings on the metal mine audit, according to the Environment department.

"The fate of 30 mining companies that failed the initial audit conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) last year will be known on Feb. 27, according to a statement released by the agency on Wednesday.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau's (MGB) Officer-in-charge Assistant Director Danilo M. Uykieng said last month that the validation of the responses of these metal mines was only to start Dec. 14, more than a month after the agency completed sending out show cause orders to the miners involved.

DENR Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez had declined to provide any detail on the findings of the audit before the scheduled release date, saying it was "premature" to do so.

The Environment chief, one week after assuming office on July 1, issued a memorandum order directing a review of all 41 metal mines in the country.

Based on the initial results released on Sept. 27, only 11 mining companies "passed" the audit and 30 firms were warned of possible suspension for failing

to meet environmental safety standards.

Prior the review, 10 metal mines were issued suspension orders.

The audit was originally supposed to be a one-month review but has since faced repeated delays.

Among the causes of delay was the sacking of former MGB Director Leo L. Jasareno, originally assigned by Ms. Lopez to head the audit.

Mr. Uykieng, the head of the technical working group which validated the responses, said that the parameters used in the nationwide audit were the same measures used in regular monitoring performed quarterly.

But this particular audit which has been running for more than six months serves to address complaints raised by residents of communities hosting these mines.

"There are many kinds of audit. An audit to improve the system. A compliance audit which, in this case, it is," Mr. Uykieng said in an earlier phone interview with *BusinessWorld*.

Mr. Uykieng also declined to give a statement on their findings. The DENR chief, however, still has the final say whether to approve these recommendations.

— Janina C. Lim

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Environment group: Mining law needs proper implementation, not repeal

Repealing the Mining Act of 1995 could only encourage illegal mining activities that do not respect government regulations, according to an environment group.

The Philippine Business for Environmental Stewardship (PBEST) warned against moves by Congress to repeal the Mining Act and replace it with proposed legislation collectively referred to as Alternative Mining Bills (AMBs).

PBEST said the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives had started conducting technical working group meetings to deliberate on the AMBs.

The law has technically been just in operation for less than eight years, and a cycle in the mining industry spans more or less 20 years. There is no need to repeal the mining law. The real problem is implementation, said Prof. Dindo Manhit, Convenor of PBEST and President of Stratbase-Albert Del Rosario Institute.

The Mining Act, or Republic Act 7942, faced constitutional challenges while Executive Order No 79 in 2012 effectively stymied its implementation.

Changing the rules in the middle of the game may just foster illegal mining activities that do not follow environmental regulations, Manhit said.

He said while the goals set in amending the Mining Act or creating new mining regulations are in the best interest of the country, the proposed methods may not be the most effective.

Some of the proposals include limiting the raw metals the country will produce to only serve the local market. PBEST said this will not jumpstart industrialization as envisioned but may even kill the mining industry.

Proposals to extend the no-mining zones over what are already covered under the Mining Act and the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act are practically tantamount to a nation-wide mining ban.

Atty. Ysan Castillo, Secretary General of PBEST said despite the group's opposition to the law's amendments, PBEST does not think that the existing law is perfect.

"There is still a lot of room for improvement, such as the transparency and dissemination of data concerning environmental programs, findings and mineral production," he said.

Castillo said additional funds should be dedicated to environmental protection, the increase of waste generation fees and some form of substantial guarantee fund for natural hazards.

Nickel prices up as PH goes after erring mines

By Ronnel W. Domingo
[@ronwdomingo@INQ](mailto:ronwdomingo@INQ)

Global prices of nickel rose by 5 percent in the fourth quarter of 2016 compared to the previous three months, partly due to the ongoing Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) audit of mines, according to the World Bank.

Based on the latest issue of the bank's quarterly Commodity Markets Outlook report, prices of the white metal increased to \$10,797 per metric ton in the December quarter from \$10,264 in the September quarter.

Even then, such increase was tempered compared to the 16.3-percent quarter-on-quarter jump in the third quarter from \$8,823 in the second quarter.

This was when the Duterte administration was installed and Regina Lopez, a staunch environmentalist, had as-

sumed office as Environment Secretary.

The World Bank forecasts nickel prices would rev up by 14.6 percent to \$11,000 in 2017 from \$9,595 in 2016.

"Nickel prices rose (in the fourth quarter of 2016) on strong stainless steel demand in China, and loss of ore output in the Philippines due to environmental audits of mines—although losses were less than initially feared," the bank said.

"The reversal of Indonesia's export ban stipulates that any miner building a smelter for at least 30 percent of its feedstock will be allowed to export excess ore supplies," it added. "However, there is uncertainty on how much excess ore will be shipped from the country (Indonesia)."

Because of the ban in Indonesia, the Philippines has been the world's biggest supplier of nickel since 2012.

In a statement issued

Wednesday, the DENR said the "fate of 30 mining companies that failed the initial audit conducted... will be known on Feb. 2," when Lopez is set to announce the final results and recommendations of an audit team.

Last July 8, Lopez ordered an immediate review of the operations of all 41 metallic mines in the country, "to look into the adequacy and efficiency of environmental protection measures taken by the mining companies, determine gaps in those measures and identify the appropriate penalties for violations of mining and environmental laws."

Subsequently, last Sept. 27, she announced that only 11 mining companies "passed" the audit and 30 firms were either ordered suspended or recommended for suspension for failing to meet environmental safety standards. INQ

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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Stronger regulation of plastic bags urged

By MARVIN SY

Citing concerns over the proliferation of plastic trash all over the world, Sen. Loren Legarda has called for stronger regulation on the use of plastic bags in the country.

Based on a 2016 report called the New Plastics Economy: Rethinking the Future of Plastics by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation, Legarda noted that the world produced 20 times more plastic in 2014 (311 million tons) than it did in 1964 (15 million tons).

At this rate, Legarda noted that oceans are expected to contain more plastic than fish (by weight) by the year 2050.

"Plastic bags are ubiquitous components of the world's consumer culture. These non-biodegradable plastic bags symbolize the throwaway culture that we have developed. We cannot go business as usual as it pollutes our oceans and water, and even the air when burned," Legarda said.

The plastic industry has stressed that plastic bags are recycled for industrial use. In areas where plastic bags have been banned, stores use double-layer paper bags, posing a threat to trees.

According to Legarda, the Philippines, together with China, Indonesia, Thailand and Vietnam, is considered

The five countries, alone, are spewing out as much as 60 percent of the plastic waste that enters the world's seas.

Legarda has filed Senate Bill 430 or the proposed Plastic Bags Regulation Act, which aims to strictly regulate the production, importation, sale and use of plastic bags.

"This proposed measure discourages the use of plastic bags and encourages the use of native reusable bags made of organic or recycled materials, and reusable containers made of glass or non-toxic and non-hazardous materials," she said.

Under the bill, a point-of-sale store will be prohibited from providing the consumer with plastic bags for the purpose of carrying or transporting items or products purchased.

Legarda said that this will put the use of single-use plastic bags to a minimum.

Only plastic bags that are used to contain fresh fish, meat and poultry products, and primary plastic packaging used to pre-pack food items and in the manufacturing of finished products for sale in the general market are excluded from the prohibitions under the bill.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

And now, tidal energy from San Bernardino Strait

THE Philippines has long been using five main types of renewable energy – hydro, geothermal, wind, solar, and biomass. Soon we will add one more – tidal energy.

The Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC)-Renewables Corp. announced that the first ocean power plant will soon be set up in the San Bernardino Strait between Sorsogon and Northern Samar, where the Pacific enters the sea surrounding our Visayan islands.

It will be a joint project of the Philippine energy company H&WB Asia Pacific Corp. and its French partner Sabella SaS, a global leader in the marine energy industry. In 2008, Sabella was acclaimed for the first experimental marine current turbine installed in France, with its submerged DO3 turbine (with a three-meter rotor diameter), followed in 2015 with its D10 turbine connected to the French grid. For the San Bernardino Strait project this year, three to five turbines will be used. This will be the first-ever tidal energy project in Southeast Asia.

Renewable energy today makes up some 26 percent of the Philippines' total energy consumption. For years we relied mainly on

our hydro-electric plants using water released from dams. We started developing geothermal energy in Tiwi, Albay, in 1979. We now have six geothermal fields in Luzon, Leyte, Negros, and Mindanao, producing about 17 percent of the nation's total energy needs.

But we remain heavily dependent on energy produced by coal plants. They account for about 70 percent of our energy needs today, and in the next four years, 12 coal power plants are scheduled to be built – five in Luzon, one in Visayas, and six in Mindanao. Despite our support for the Paris Agreement on Climate Change in December, 2015, we have to continue with these long approved projects. We need the power that the coal plants can easily and immediately provide.

Our search for more sources of clean energy, however, continues with no let-up. We have already set up several solar plant sites in many parts of the country, on top of our wind power plants. The San Bernardino Strait plant using tidal power is the latest project in our continuing implementation of the Renewable Energy Act of 2009 and our commitment to a cleaner and healthier planet earth.

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THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
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MANILA BULLETIN

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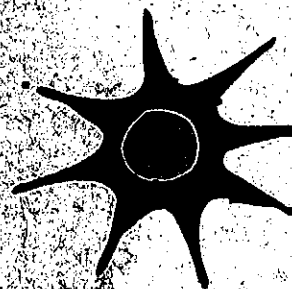
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And now, tidal energy from San Bernardino Strait

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EDITORIAL

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EDITORIAL

AT NGAYON... TIDAL ENERGY NAMAN MULA SA SAN BERNARDINO STRAIT

MATAGAL nang gumagamit ang Pilipinas ng limang pangunahinguring renewable energy - ang hydro, geothermal, wind, solar, at biomass. At malapit nang madagdagan ito - ang tidal energy.

Inihayag ng Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC)-Renewables Corp. na malapit nang itayo ang unang ocean power plant sa San Bernardino Strait sa pagitan ng Corsogon at Northern Samar, kung saan pumapasok ang Pasipiko sa karagatang nakapaligid sa ating mga isla sa Visayas.

Ito ay proyektong pinagtuwang nang kumpanyang kuryente sa Pilipinas na HK-WB Asia Pacific Corp. at ang French partner nitong Sabella S-S, isang pandaigdigang leader sa industriya ng enerhiya sa dagat. Noong 2003, kinilala ang Sabella sa unang experimental marine current turbine na tinayos sa France, na ang nakalubog nitong D03 turbine (na may tatlong-metro ng rotor diameter) ay sinundan noong 2015 ng D10 turbine na nakakonekta sa French grid. Para sa proyektong sa San Bernardino Strait na yong taon, tatlo hanggang limang turbine ang gagamitin. Ito ang magiging kauna-unahang tidal energy project sa Timog-Silangang Asya.

Sangayon, binubuong renewable energy ang nasa 26 na porsiyentong kabuuang konsumo sa enerhiyang Pilipinas. Sa nakalipas na mga taon, pangunahin natin ginamit ang ating mga hydro-electric plant na gumagamit ng tubig mula sa mga dam. Sinimulan natin ang pagdedevelop ng enerhiyang geothermal sa Tiwi, Albay, noong 1979. Mayroon tayong gayong anim na geothermal field sa Luzon, Leyte, Negros, at Mindanao, lumilikha ng 17 porsiyentong kabuuang pangangailangan sa kuryenteng bansa.

Ngunit nasa tatlong nakadepende sa enerhiyang nalilikha ng mga coal plant. Binubuo nito ang nasa 70 porsiyentong ating pangangailangan sa kuryente sangayon, at sa susunod na papunta sa 12 coal power plant ang nakatakdang itayo - limang sa Luzon, isa sa Visayas, at anim sa Mindanao. Sa kabilang ating sinusuportang mga

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'Hot' lumber confiscated in N. Samar

BY RESTIVO A. CAYUPAN

TACLOBAN CITY—More than 2,640 board feet of illegally cut lumber were seized by the police in Catubig, Northern Samar, last week, according to a report from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) regional office Wednesday.

DENR Regional Director Leonardo Sibbaluca told reporters the illegally sawn lumber valued at ₱79,365 was recovered by town police near Irawan Bridge of the town.

Sibbaluca said the confiscation of the lumber was carried out following a tip from an informant.

The owners of the illegally cut lumber escaped. The lumber was turned over to the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office in the nearby town of Pambujan for custody and proper disposition.

The police provincial chief, Senior Supt. Ceasar Tannagan, called on the public to cooperate with authorities in the campaign against the illegal cutting of lumber to protect and conserve the environment.

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The Manila Times

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SET

The economy of cities: Why land use matters

FOR the Philippines to be able to attain high sustainable economic development in the coming decades it cannot rely on natural industries such as tourism and raw-material production and on high population-consumption alone. The country has to learn how to process its natural resources into other productive use and be able to create new industries out of them.

I want to share an excerpt from the work, "The Competitive Advantage of Nations," written by Michael Porter for the Harvard Business Review:

"In the sophisticated industries that form the backbone of any advanced economy, a nation does not inherit but instead creates the most important factors of production—such as skilled human resources or a scientific base... The most important factors of production are those that involve sustained and heavy investment and are specialized. Basic factors, such as a pool of labor or a local raw-material source, do not constitute an advantage in knowledge-intensive industries".

If our country continues to be dependent in producing raw materials alone, the return of investment for the country abruptly stops in the earlier stages of a value chain or operations chain. In a value chain, each step is actually an industry in itself. For example, the Philippines is one of the top exporters of semi-conductors which are used for electronics, computers, and cellphones around the world. The semi-conductors are shipped to other Asian nations, and will be used as a critical component for micro-chips. During the development of micro-chips, there is simultaneous development of software-making and operating systems. On the part of manufacturing, engineers are challenged to be more innovative in speeding up assembly plants; in



FELINO A.
PALAFOX, JR.

The billions of dollars of profit cannot be made possible without the sourcing of raw materials. And the Philippines has an abundance of these. Our country has the capacity to become influential in the world of the electronic industry because it is a source for a critical element in micro-chip sourcing.

Despite the abundance of resources, however, the Philippines has not capitalized on the potential of taking part in the other industries of the value chain. Germany, Italy, South Korea, and Japan are more limited in terms of raw-material sourcing, yet these countries were able to venture into luxury car making, textiles, smart phones, smart televisions and other technological breakthroughs. These countries need to import important raw materials to be able to produce the world's top branded products. According to Porter, whenever a resource is expensive or unavailable, companies in countries like Japan innovate.

What is hindering the development of the Philippines' manufacturing and processing industries?

Land use matters

Land use determines the type of activity that can be done in a

specific area or specific lot. In a bigger context, the aggregate of all land use in a city makes a city plan. The land use determines whether or not a high traffic impact building can be constructed in an area because the planned road can accommodate the volume

Land use is also the guide in balancing traffic generation and traffic circulation. For example, in the American Planning Association, super-regional malls should be at least nine kilometers apart. If two malls are built within proximity of each other, the city can expect massive traffic gridlocks. And it does not help if the city has an inefficient mass transportation system.

In terms of operations, land use contributes to cost-efficiency and accessibility to other intended areas. For example, the quarrying areas in the North should have dedicated truck lanes towards processing plants. If it does not have one, heavy industrial trucks will share the road with passenger vehicles causing traffic gridlocks, accidents, and will take a toll in road maintenance.

Part of land use is also policy. For example, special economic zones or special industrial zones that are created give special incentives to companies. Specific areas can have lower tax rates and tax holidays, or have better road maintenance and specialized sewage and solid waste treatment areas. These special land uses become favorable areas for companies to develop on because the cost to operate is much lower and market potentials are higher because of better planned logistic strategies.

In cities like Shanghai, China and Dublin, Ireland, the lease of land to companies lasts more than 50 years, and for some 100 years. With this kind of set-up, companies know that these will be areas for long-term development, affecting education and

Recommendation

The natural strength of the Philippines is in the service industry, the tourism industry, English speaking proficiency, and production of raw materials for semi-conductors. Special land uses can be dedicated to these industries, making sure that they have special tax holidays and infrastructures. Come to think of it, the Philippines should have one of the best hotels and resorts in the world because it is part of the country's natural strength. Again, the key is in land use. The national government should do a better job looking into its proper implementation.

The Manila Times

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SE

Pacific Islanders call for US solidarity

CANBERRA, Australia: The new political power of business magnate Donald Trump, inaugurated January 20 as the 45th President of the United States, will have ramifications for every global region, including the Pacific Islands.

Pacific leaders who are witnessing rising seas, coastal erosion and severe natural disasters in the region are alert to the new president's declared skepticism about climate change and the contributing factor of human activities. His proposed policy changes include cutting international climate funding and pushing ahead fossil fuel projects.

They say the United States' solidarity on climate change action is vital to protecting people in developing and industrialized nations from climate-driven disasters, environmental degradation and poverty.

There are 22 Pacific Island states and territories and 35 percent of the region's population of about 10 million people lives below the poverty line. One of the most vulnerable to climate change is the Polynesian nation of Tuvalu, home to about 10,000 people spread over nine low lying coral islands.

"Tuvalu is among the poorest in the world, it is isolated, small and low in elevation. All aspects of life, from protecting our small land to food security, from our marine resources to our traditional gardens are being

impacted by climate change. All the adaptation measures that need to be put in place need international climate funding. With Trump's intended withdrawal pathway, our survival is denied and justice is ignored," Reverend Tafue Lusama, General Secretary of the Tuvalu Christian Church and global advocate for climate action, told IPS.

Trump's 100-day action plan, issued during last year's presidential campaign, claims it will tackle government corruption, accountability and waste and improve the lives of US citizens who have been marginalized by globalization and 'special interests' of the political elite.

But his intended actions include canceling billions in payments to United Nations climate change programs, aimed at assisting the most vulnerable people in developing countries, and approving energy projects, worth trillions of dollars, involving shale, oil, natural gas and coal in the United States in a bid to boost domestic jobs.

Last December, 800 scientists and energy experts worldwide wrote an open letter to the then president-elect encouraging him to remain steadfast to policies put forward during the Barack Obama administration such as reducing the country's dependence on fossil fuels, which in association with industrial processes accounts for

65 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, and supporting renewable energy development.

"It is sad for us who rely on the United States to do the right thing and to hear the President embarking on the opposite path, which is ensuring our destruction," Reverend Lusama added.

London-based Chatham House claims that a key success of the COP21 climate change conference in Paris in 2015 was the supportive 'alignment' of the United States, the second largest emitter accounting for 16 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. Here the United States joined the High Ambition Coalition, a grouping of countries committed to rigorous climate targets, which was instrumental in driving consensus that global warming should be kept lower than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

Increased global warming could be disastrous for Pacific Island states with many already facing a further rise in sea levels, extremely high daily temperatures and ocean acidification this century, reports the Pacific Climate Change Science Program.

In 2015 the region was hit by a severe El Nino climate cycle which 'forced people to walk for days seeking sustenance... and, in some cases, to become severely weakened or die from malnutrition,' Caritas reports. In Papua New Guinea, 2.7 million

large numbers to fall ill. A US academic study estimated that the crisis may have led to over 100,000 premature deaths. The alert status in Riau—below

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But it is rare for such a criminal trial.

The alleged involve officers in the trade is that the ruling junta p corruption credentials.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Duterte cartoon pushes coastal environment protection

In a bid to reach out to the public, especially the fisherfolk in rural communities, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has produced an animated video featuring President Duterte in an educational campaign on coastal environment protection.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol presented the video in a briefing at Malacañang last week, aimed at promoting the government's campaign against illegal fishing, use of dynamite and other forms of fishing that destroy the oceans.

The video depicts a cartoon figure of Duterte, in a checkered polo shirt and pants, strolling along the sea-side. The cartoon also portrays the President fuming upon seeing activities that destroy the coastal areas such as the

use of dynamite and damage to mangroves.

With a background tune of a video game, Duterte is also shown wearing goggles while diving in the sea, still clad in his checkered polo and pants.

In the same briefing, Piñol also reported that the flash floods in Northern Mindanao were due to illegal logging.

"In fact, just yesterday, we received reports from Northern Mindanao that flash floods caused a lot of devastation and damage not only to property and lives but also to agriculture," he said.

In the face of this problem, Piñol said the DA is focusing on its ability to be able to adapt to climate change.

Warning to LGUs

The DA also warned local executives to initiate moves

By CHRISTINA MENDEZ

to stop illegal fishing in their areas of face administrative charges.

"While we are giving incentives to coastal communities to protect their fishing grounds, the President has also made it clear that just like the campaign against drugs and criminality, the campaign against illegal fishing will also be very strict," Piñol said.

He added that Duterte announced during the last Cabinet meeting the next target of operations will be "mayors and barangay chairmen of towns and villages where illegal fishing is prevalent."

The local officials were given six months or until June to stop illegal fishing in their jurisdictions.

"After that, the Department

of Agriculture will file administrative charges against mayors and barangay chairmen who could not stop illegal fishing in their communities. This is part of our advocacy to protect our fishing industry," Piñol said.

"With that, I would like to emphasize once again that this program is part of our effort to really protect our land, our fishing resources, our land resources," the agriculture secretary said.

Piñol also announced that the DA is looking for outstanding coastal communities as part of efforts to produce more in the fishery sector, to protect the fishing industry.

As number one criteria, Piñol said these coastal communities should be free of illegal fishing.

"There must be a self-proclaimed closed fishing season to allow the fish to spawn and produce more," he said.

Piñol said it would be a big factor if the coastal community has a declared marine sanctuary.

"There should be no garbage in their coastal waters and there should be a mangrove protection area," he added.

The winners of this annual search will receive a presidential award.

The winning coastal community would receive P20 million that could be used for livelihood programs and projects in their community.

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Global warming could steal postcard-perfect weather days

WASHINGTON (AP) – Global warming is going to steal away some of those postcard-perfect weather days in the future, according to a first-of-its-kind projection of nice weather.

On average, Earth will have 10 fewer days of mild and mostly dry weather by the end of the century, the researchers estimate. Some places will get more days perfect for picnics or outdoor weddings, while other places will lose a lot. Rio de Janeiro, Miami and much of Africa are big losers, while Europe and Seattle will gain nicer weather.

"It's the type of weather where you can go outside and do something fun," said study lead author Karin van der Wiel, a meteorology researcher at Princeton University and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. "It's not too cold. It's not too hot. It's not too humid."

For the past three decades,

the world has averaged 74 mild days a year. But by 2035 that will shrink to 70 and then 64 by the last two decades of the century, according to the study, published Wednesday in the journal *Climatic Change*. Mild weather was defined as between 68 and 86 degrees (18 and 30 degrees Celsius) with low humidity and no more than a trace of rain.

Any change depends on where you live and the time of year. For example, on average, the US will lose nine mild summer days by the end of the century, although most is gained back with more mild days in the winter, spring and fall. The report estimates that Washington, Chicago, New York and Dallas will lose two

weeks of pleasant summer weather but some is gained back. On average, Washington loses 13 mild days; Atlanta, 12; Chicago, nine; Denver and New York, six; and Dallas, one.

The biggest losers will be the tropics and nearly all of Africa, eastern South America, South Asia and northern Australia. Rio de Janeiro, on average, will see 40 mild days disappear. Miami will lose its only mild summer day and nearly a month of spring and fall mild days by 2100.

"The changes are more dramatic in parts of the developing world, where you have high concentrations of populations," said NOAA climate scientist and co-author Sarah Kapnick.

Other places, especially northern developed ones, will gain some of what the tropics lost. England and northern Europe are big winners. Seattle should pick up nine mild days

and Los Angeles, which already has a lot of nice weather, gets six extra by the end of the century.

The scientists didn't specifically focus on whether the loss of mild days has already started globally, but they did see it happening in much of Africa and South America, Van der Wiel said.

Climate scientists usually focus on extreme weather – record heat, tropical cyclones, droughts, floods – and how they could get worse as the world warms. Kapnick said she wanted to look at nice weather because her friends kept asking her what day to choose for good wedding weather.

The team used a middle ground scenario for global warming – not worst-case runaway carbon pollution and not dramatic cuts in emissions of heat-trapping gases – and ran different computer

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climate change . . .

you don't have data."

As of Friday afternoon, no major changes could be found on other major government websites associated with climate change. But allies of the Trump administration said they were not surprised to see the change to the website, and expect to see more.

"What do you expect? A new administration is coming

in with a very different view of the world," said Chris Warren, a spokesman for the Institute for Energy Research.

Trump has relied on that think tank for energy policy advice. The group's president, Thomas Pyle, has advised Trump's transition team.

"Each president has different priorities," Warren said. "We saw the priorities of

President Obama reflected in the previous website. The new administration has a very different way of looking at the world. He wants to increase oil and gas and increase wages, and you can tell from the changes to the website that it looks like what he talked about on the campaign trail."

— New York Times News Service

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Climate change references purged from White House website

WASHINGTON — Within moments of the inauguration of US President Donald Trump, the official White House website Friday deleted nearly all mentions of climate change. The one exception: Trump's vow to eliminate the Obama administration's climate change policies, which previously had its own prominent and detailed webpage on whitehouse.gov.

The purge was not unexpected. It came as part of the full digital turnover of whitehouse.gov, including taking down and archiving all the Obama administration's personal and policy pages. That also included a page devoted to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender issues. At the same time, the official White House Twitter handles also changed over, allowing Trump to now post on Twitter as @POTUS.

But the digital change, which flashed into place at noon Friday, immediately placed into sharp relief some of the starkest differences between the old president and the new. And for advocates of climate change policy, it presented the first concrete sign that Trump remains, as he was on the campaign trail, skeptical and dismissive of the established science of human-caused climate change, and committed to blocking policies to curb it.

Scientists fear the online deletions will extend far be-

yond changes to introductory websites and into the realm of government data. Climate change data gathered and stored by the US government are considered among the most authoritative in the world. But scientists worry the data will be deleted during the Trump administration.

Since Trump's election, about 50 scientists at universities around the country have volunteered their time — and computer servers — to save and store government data stored on the websites of the Environmental Protection Agency, NASA, NOAA and the US Geological Services. Those websites keep records of key climate data such as atmospheric temperature trends, greenhouse gas emissions levels and sea level rise.

The scientist gatherings have been organized by 314 Action — a nonprofit group named for the first three numbers of the mathematical concept Pi — which aims to make science more accessible to the public.

"The government has done a great job of collecting and maintaining climate change data on these websites located all across the federal government," said Shaughnessy Naughton, the founder of 314 Action. "The concern is that the data may no longer be publicly available, and then that they may no longer gather the data. It's a lot easier to deny climate change when

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Global warming could steal postcard-perfect
weather days

simulations to see what would happen.

It's not just fewer nice days to enjoy. Fewer mild days will also harm agricultural production and allow disease carrying insects to thrive more in more places, said University of Georgia meteorology professor Marshall Shepherd.

Stanford University climate scientist Chris Field, who led an international study of extreme weather, questioned the purpose of the study: "Extreme conditions are the sharp end of the climate stick. It is in the extremes when things break and damage occurs."

National Center for Atmospheric Research scientist Gerald Meehl, who also studies extreme weather, said a decrease in mild weather may not quite have the economic and health costs but there are other factors such as tourism "or simple human enjoyment."

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Filipinos urged to take action vs climate change

The scale of destruction caused by super-typhoon Yolanda in 2013 awakened Filipinos and the world to the consequence of inaction and divisiveness on climate change. Seven million individuals were affected by disaster, more than 5 million jobs were lost, and more than 4 million people were displaced. Billions of pesos were needed for medical aid and rebuilding efforts, and death counts unbearable even for a country visited annually by 20 storms. All these pointed to the stark truth that our planet is under threat.

That year, the Philippines topped the Global Climate Risk Index's list of countries most vulnerable to weather-related disasters. The storm's aftermath revealed more complex realities borne of disasters. Blocked roads and bridges limited the access to food rations from outside, supplies dipped, and hunger rose in affected communities. Children's groups shared fears for the wellbeing of those left orphan by the storm and living in relocation sites.

The country's economy was not spared. Yolanda ripped power lines from as far as Laguna and Zamboanga del Sur to the hardest-hit areas like Leyte, Samar, and Bohol. Disconnected from the national grid, agricultural and service-oriented industries were paralyzed for months. The National Economic and Development Authority registered inflation rates as high as 6% and a 1.6% rise in poverty incidence which set poverty levels at 47.3% in Leyte.

Geography has always put a known risk on the country. Its archipelagic nature leave parcels of land open to the battering of strong currents, but a more worrying phenomenon has risen since. The Philippine Exposure Map on Climate Change, drafted by the

Department of Environment and Natural Resources, detailed the dwindling sources of water for the upper regions, while provinces in the Visayas and Mindanao face the combined threat of "extreme heat and rising sea levels."

To mitigate the risks that come with climate change and global warming, the Philippines pledged to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 70% and encourage the shift from coal to more sustainable sources of energy. The accord achieved during the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris is scheduled to take effect this November.

A year after, discussions on the Paris agreement and its effectiveness and scope are still on the table. The commitment to reduce the national emission is being contested, but vital areas like climate justice is making its way to the mainstream discourse. In May, 2016, typhoon victims filed a case against carbon emitters, a landmark case for human rights related to climate.

People are taking action, refusing the dim future that looms on the horizon. They are becoming more conscientious in their use of energy and carbon footprint. Many are exploring transportation options like carpooling and demanding cities to reserve spaces for bike lanes. Even industrial designs are reflecting this predisposition to cleaner, more earth-friendly buildings, as well as energy-saving machines.

More forums are being hosted, among them Climate Reality Project's sponsorship of top climate change advocate Al Gore. Climate Reality Project, a global multi-sectoral alliance, enjoins more Filipinos in its cause for the environment.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Climate-ravaged corals recover poorly—study

PARIS (AFP) — Coral reefs that survive rapid bleaching fuelled by global warming remain deeply damaged, with little prospect of full recovery, researchers said.

Sixteen years after the 1998 El Niño ravaged coral in the Indian Ocean's Seychelles archipelago, no reefs had recovered their original growth rates and barely a third were expanding at all, they reported in a study, the first to track coral health over a two-decade period.

As important, perhaps, were qualitative changes.

A dozen of 21 reefs tracked from 1994 were still struggling in 2014 against leafy algae, sea urchins and parrot fish to restore their original balance of shallow-water flora and fauna.

The rest underwent what marine biologists call a "regime shift", and are today composed of a new — and far less diverse — mix of corals.

"At any given site, there were at least 35 types of coral" in 1994, said lead author Fraser Januchowski-Hartley, a researcher from the University of Exeter. "Today, we see five to 10."

Four of the reefs only had two percent coral cover in 2014, and are likely to die out entirely.

Covering one percent of the ocean's area but home to a quarter of its biodiversity, coral reefs are extremely sensitive to temperature change.

They are also hugely important as incubators and habitat for thousands of marine species, and vital to the livelihoods of half a billion people around the world.

With barely one degree Celsius (1.8 degrees Fahrenheit) of manmade warming so far, corals have been devastated by rapidly warming waters that cause them to turn white.

The UN estimates that a third of global coral reefs have already been destroyed.

Australia's Great Barrier Reef and



Corals / via Pixabay / Manila Bulletin

the Maldives have been hit especially hard.

The cyclical weather phenomena known as El Niño, aggravated by climate change, is especially devastating — the 2015-16 event was the most intense on record.

Januchowski-Hartley and colleagues looked at a key measure of how well corals recover after such traumas that had mostly been overlooked: The rate at which their rock-like formations either build up or erode.

"Much of the work on recovery from bleaching has been on easily measurable metrics, such as coral cover or fish abundance," he told AFP.

Corals are nourished by microscopic algae called dinoflagellates, that live in vast colonies on their surface.

The algae consume nitrogen, phosphorus and other nutrients derived from the coral, and use light to transform those substances into energy.

The photosynthesis also liberates energy in the coral's tissue, enabling it to build the calcium skeletons that

provide a habitat for these single-cell organisms.

When the coral is under stress, it sheds the dinoflagellates and whitens.

In the Seychelles, none of the 21 reefs monitored was as robust as in 1994, according to the study, published in the Royal Society's Proceedings B.

The future looks even bleaker.

Even before the 2015-2016 El Niño, about 70 percent of the archipelago's reefs were set to go into decline, the study found.

To make matters worse, bleaching events are likely to occur more frequently as climate change deepens.

Will corals reefs survive? Yes and no, Januchowski-Hartley said.

"The picture-postcard reefs popularized by nature documentaries are likely to become much rarer by mid-century," he told AFP.

There will still be coral reefs, he added. But they will likely be biologically "impoverished" and will no longer support the ecosystems — including humans — they once did.

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EU body cites severe risks of climate change
COPENHAGEN—The European Environment Agency says the continent is facing rising sea levels and more extreme weather, such as more frequent and more intense heat waves, flooding, droughts and storms because of climate change. The Copenhagen-based agency says that its assessment is based on the latest trends and projections on climate change and its impacts across Europe. The European Union (EU) body says that observed changes in climate "are already having wide-ranging impacts" on ecosystems, the economy and on human health and well-being in Europe. —AP

Green Industries

Govt toughens protection of Tañon Strait

BY BEN KRITZ

THE Tañon Strait Protected Area Office is set to operationalize the enforcement plan for the Tañon Strait Protected Seascape, increasing seaborne patrol operations and speeding up the filing of cases against violators.

Environmental watchdogs Oceana Philippines said in a statement announcing the new enforcement efforts that Tañon Strait is a critical marine habitat and important migratory path for 14 of the 27 species of whales and dolphins in the Philippines. It is a rich fishing ground supplying the fish protein needs of the 42 cities and municipalities in Cebu and Negros Islands.

"Tañon Strait is a marine biodiversity hotspot. Effective management mechanisms are necessary, along with strong law enforcement, to ensure that it is protected. The operationalization of the enforcement plan should deter the unregulated commercial fishing and destructive activities in the protected area," said Gloria Estenzo



MORE PROTECTION

Residents of the Tañon Strait Protected Seascape, like this sea turtle, will be safer after the implementation of an improved enforcement plan to apprehend and punish environmental violators. PHOTO OCEANA PHILIPPINES

Ramos, Vice President for Oceana Philippines.

The enforcement plan serves as the guide in harmonizing the functions of government agencies tasked to protect Tañon Strait. It is intended to strengthen enforcement measures in the protected seascape, and includes a step-by-step enforcement strategy for operations, surveillance, and filing of cases against violators, the group explained.

This is one of the components of Tañon Strait's General Management Plan (GMP), which provides mechanisms for protecting marine habitats, ensuring sustainable fish-

eries, and reducing illegal fishing through increased patrolling and apprehension, prosecution of violators, and training of law enforcers.

"Regular patrols and surveillance activities are necessary for the detection and intelligence gathering of violations within the protected area," said Am Prospero Lendio, the protected area superintendent in Tañon Strait.

The TSPS Protected Area Office said that it would also conduct regular inspection of fishing vessels along Tañon Strait, and pursue legal action against violators.

Oceana, in partnership with

various government agencies such as the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, and the Department of Justice, assisted in providing legal trainings to law enforcement personnel, including the newly designated special prosecutors for protected areas. Oceana is also working with the fisheries bureau in pilot-testing vessel monitoring technologies to track fishing activities in Tañon Strait.

Despite being declared a protected area in 1998, Tañon Strait

still suffers from exploitation by commercial fishermen encroaching in municipal waters, degradation of critical habitats, and over harvesting of fishery resources, Oceana said.

"Protecting Tañon Strait is a challenging, yet vital, task. The strengthened collaboration of various stakeholders to conserve and protect this critically important marine habitat and fishing ground, where thousands of fishers depend on for food and livelihood, has to be prioritized to ensure sustainable seafood security for future generations," Ramos said.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Gov't, LGUs take tougher stance against Tañon Strait illegal fishers

Concerned government agencies and local government units (LGUs) will conduct more sea patrols and file cases against illegal and commercial fishers in Tañon Strait, the country's largest marine protected area between Cebu and Negros.

Regular patrols and surveillance activities are necessary for the detection and intelligence gathering of violations within the protected area, as part of an enforcement plan, said Am Prospero Lendio, area superintendent of the Tañon Strait Protected Seascape (TSPS), which is under the supervision of the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-BMB).

Lendio said the enforcement plan serves as guide in harmonizing the initiatives of concerned government agencies to protect Tañon Strait. The plan includes regular inspection of fishing vessels along Tañon Strait, a step-by-step strategy for operations and surveillance, and filing of cases against violators.

Tañon Strait is a critical marine habitat and important migratory path for 14 of the 27 species of whales and dolphins in the Philippines. It is a rich fishing ground, providing livelihood to thousands of fisherfolk and their families in the 42 coastal cities and municipalities in Cebu and Negros Islands.

led by the DENR, with the provincial, municipal and barangay LGUs as members, including other concerned government agencies like the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), Department of the Interior and

Local Government, Philippine National Police, Department of Justice (DOJ), and civil society organizations.

"Tañon Strait is a marine biodiversity hotspot. Effective management mechanisms are necessary, along with

strong law enforcement, to ensure that it is protected. The operationalization of the enforcement plan should deter the banned commercial fishing and destructive activities in the protected area," said lawyer Gloria Estenzo

Ramos, Vice President for Oceana Philippines.

The enforcement plan is one of the components of Tañon Strait's General Management Plan (GMP), which provides mechanisms for protecting marine habitats, ensuring sustainable fisheries, and reducing illegal fishing through increased patrolling and apprehension, prosecution of violators, and training of law enforcers, Ramos said.

She said Oceana, in partnership with the DENR-BMB, BFAR and the DOJ, has assisted in providing legal trainings to law enforcement personnel, including the newly designated

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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Gov't, LGUs take tougher stance against Tañon Strait 'illegal' fishers

Despite being declared a protected area in 1998, Tañon Strait still suffers from exploitation by commercial fishers encroaching in municipal waters, degradation of critical habitats, and over harvesting of fishery resources, she said.

"Protecting Tañon Strait is a challenging, yet vital task. The strengthened collaboration of various stakeholders to conserve and protect this critically important marine habitat and fishing ground, where thousands of fishers depend on for food and livelihood, has to be prioritized to ensure sustainable seafood security for future generations," Ramos said.





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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Re-odong sa DENR
Bristuan, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Gina Lopez ang 17 regional offices upang matiyak ang lahat ng mga proyekto at programang ahensya.
Ayon kay Lopez, ang re-odong nina opisyal ay bahagi ng 5-year development planing DENR na nagtatag ng sustainable integrated area development (SIAD) at dininodong "Am Bayan Natin 2040" ang 25-year long term visioning pamahalaan para matamang Filipinas ang middle-class society.
Sa lahat nito, itatagala bilang site managers ang field officers para sa area development management program (ADMP) sites.
Tinukoy ni Lopez ang ADMP Areas na itatagala sa Chico River at Mt. Pulag sa Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR); Zamboanga, Laur sa Pantabangan, Nueva Ecija, Sierra Madre sa Cagayan, Sierra Madre sa Nueva Ecija, Kalina watershed sa Marikina at Sierra Madre sa Batangas, Cordillera Verde Reserve, Laguna Lake, Palawan, Sibuyan Island, Basilan, Occidental at Oriental Mindoro at Sulu.
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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

La Niña to ease next month – weathermen

La Niña-like conditions over the past few months persisted in some parts of the Philippines but international climate prediction centers see the pattern gradually fading by February.

Forecasters of the Washington-based National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Australian Bureau of Meteorology, Japan Meteorological Agency, APEC Climate Center in South Korea, and World Meteorological Organization said the weather pattern will return to neutral condition, where neither El Niño nor La Niña is present, by next month.

While the climate pattern returns to neutral condition, the

Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration warned the public that La Niña-like conditions could continue as its adverse impacts have been seen in some flood- and landslide-prone areas in the country.

During La Niña conditions, major parts of the country experience near to above-normal rainfall conditions particularly over the eastern sections.

Just this month, parts of Visayas and Mindanao suffered from flash floods which is a manifestation of the La Niña-like condition prevailing in the country. **(Ellalyn V. Ruiz)**