



## **NEWS ROUNDUP**

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- What are the La Nina and El Nino climate phenomena?
- Legislator seeks preparation of disaster map
- \$500-M ADB loan targets resilience
- Marcos to lawyers: Protect rights amid cybercrimes, climate crisis
- Ending fossil fuel dependence
- Philippines allocates P1 trillion for climate change initiatives in 2025
- Better Disaster Response Needed: Yamsuan Bats For Passage Of Hazard Mapping Law

### **ABS CBN**

#### **[What are the La Nina and El Nino climate phenomena?](#)**

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### **BUSINESS MIRROR**

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By: Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz

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### **DAILY TRIBUNE**

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By: Kathryn Jose

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## **GMA NEWS**

### **[Marcos to lawyers: Protect rights amid cybercrimes, climate crisis](#)**

By: Joviland Rita

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## **MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT**

### **[Ending fossil fuel dependence](#)**

By: Raymond Africa

A move to free the country from dependence on fossil-based systems and shifting to renewable sources of energy to reduce greenhouse (GHG) emissions is being pushed at the Senate.

### **[Philippines allocates P1 trillion for climate change initiatives in 2025](#)**

By: Angela Celis

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## **POLITIKO**

### **[Better Disaster Response Needed: Yamsuan Bats For Passage Of Hazard Mapping Law](#)**

By: Billy Begas

In a bid to enhance the country’s disaster response, Bicol Saro party-list Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan urged Congress to pass a measure aimed at creating a national disaster map to help save lives and reduce losses from natural calamities.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

**ABS CBN**

### [What are the La Nina and El Nino climate phenomena?](#)

As the temperature dipped in the Northern Hemisphere over December 2024, a delayed La Nina weather event finally arrived in the tropical Pacific Ocean, say meteorologists.

Marked by colder surface water in the eastern Pacific — in contrast to El Nino events that bring hotter waters — La Nina could potentially usher cooler weather and more intense storms and rainfall to many parts of the world.

But while it has edged out one of the big contributors to the record-breaking global temperatures over the past year, El Nino, the La Nina weather phase has been relatively weak, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) in the US.

As is typical of La Nina, the Pacific trade winds that blow east-west — and which weaken during El Nino — have become stronger again, bringing more clouds and rain to Indonesia.

But the relatively weak and delayed La Nina shift means the weather event will likely be shorter. NOAA's climate prediction center says there is a 59% chance La Nina will persist through February to April, followed by a 60% chance of neutral conditions from March to May 2025.

If La Nina lasted until summer in the northern hemisphere, experts say it could increase the chances of more damaging and intense hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean, for example.

The La Nina and El Nino weather phases are part of the so-called El Nino-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), a climate pattern triggered in the Pacific Ocean that involves changes in wind and ocean temperatures which can influence extreme weather across the globe.

El Nino — "the little boy" in Spanish — was linked to record global temperatures in 2023 that amounted to the hottest year on record. Along with climate change, El Nino contributed to extreme heat waves and drought across Southeast Asia and parts of Africa.

Its "little girl" sister, La Nina, creates weather patterns that, although variable, tend to be cooler and wetter, and can lead to intense storms and hurricanes.

The effects of both El Nino and La Nina can vary considerably, and don't affect every region of the world. They can also be influenced by other climate events. Both weather patterns can have a huge impact on global agriculture and the well-being of billions of people around the world, already under strain due to the effects of climate change.

#### How El Nino causes weather extremes

El Nino commonly occurs every two to seven years when regular trade winds moving east-west across the Pacific Ocean weaken and sometimes even reverse.

These winds usually blow across the equator and take warm water from South America toward Southeast Asia and Australia.

But, when the winds start to calm, the warmer water remains in South America and fails to travel west. As the warmth suppresses the usual upswell of cold water in the eastern Pacific, extra heat in the atmosphere typically supercharges regional rainfall and causes flooding in places like northern South America.

Meanwhile, the absence of warm water in the western Pacific can result in drought and extreme temperatures.

El Nino's disruption of ocean heat can alter the path of jet streams — strong winds far above the ground — that travel the planet, guiding rains. This causes broad climate disruption, including the stalling of the monsoon season in Indonesia and India, but also the reduction of hurricane activity in the Atlantic.

Though researchers have found that the direct impact of El Nino on rainfall in eastern Africa is relatively modest, they say it can kick-start a positive Indian Ocean Dipole, another climate pattern that can bring extreme flooding to the region.

#### La Nina fuels storms and hurricanes

La Nina, another key phase in the ENSO, has the opposite impact from El Nino as predominant east-west winds become stronger than usual. Typically, La Nina events tend to occur every three to five years.

An increase of warmer water in the west can bring increased rainfall to Australia and Southeast Asia.

La Nina phases can spark drought and wildfires in eastern Pacific regions, from the southwestern United States and Mexico through to South America. However, regional variability means that northeast US states and Canada tend to be wetter and colder during La Nina winters.

La Nina also typically enhances hurricane activity in the Atlantic Basin, a phenomenon that is being exacerbated by record warm ocean surface temperatures in the Atlantic.

Impacts hard to predict

Though La Nina and El Nino are natural patterns, their relative impacts can vary depending on their timing, duration and complex climate influences that include human-induced global heating. There is some evidence that climate change has these patterns more frequent and intense.

Scientists have said El Nino and La Nina cycles are likely to hit harder as the planet heats up. Hotter air holds more water and causes more extreme rainfall.

Researchers add that achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions through the phasing out of fossil fuels has the potential to limit both global heating and ENSO impacts.

## **BUSINESS MIRROR**

### **Legislator seeks preparation of disaster map**

By: Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz

A Lawmaker has filed a bill that mandates the development and issuance by the government of a national disaster map as a means to help save lives and mitigate losses from natural calamities.

Bicol Saro Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan said the measure –House Bill (HB) 11205– provides for the creation of this map, which will contain a list that clearly identifies low-lying areas vulnerable to rising sea levels and communities at high-risk for natural disasters.

A similar “hazard map” was prepared during the incumbency of the late Angelo Reyes as Secretary of Environment and Natural Resources during the presidency of now Pampanga Rep. Gloria Arroyo but that map has since been outdated.

“We cannot prevent the occurrences of typhoons, volcanic eruptions and other natural phenomena, aggravated by the added threat of climate change. But it is possible to mitigate their impact by adopting science-based strategies. These include creating a national disaster map that would help communities, especially coastal areas, prepare for, and lessen the devastating effects of these disasters,” Yamsuan said.

He said the previous year starkly highlighted the urgency of passing this measure, with the country experiencing a record-breaking severe typhoon season that led to the loss of thousands of lives and massive damages to homes, infrastructure and the agriculture sector.

The economic repercussions of these successive calamities were most felt in the Bicol Region, where the damage to agriculture alone from typhoons Kristine and Leon reached P2.9 billion. This is almost half of the nearly P6 billion total losses reported in the agriculture sector, said Yamsuan, who represents the Bicol Saro party-list group in the House of Representatives.

HB 11205 mandates the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through the National Mapping and Resources Information Authority (Namria) and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), to provide and issue a national disaster map of the Philippines.

Assisting these agencies in completing the task are the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA), Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).

The disaster map identifies low-lying areas vulnerable to rising sea levels as a result of climate change; areas of high-risk for natural disasters; and “shall contain proper identification of lands bordering sea levels, exposed to volcanic eruption and lying on earthquake faults.”

Under the bill, the map should also include the criteria for evacuation and illustration of recommended evacuation sites and routes.

Creating the disaster map would not have to start from scratch, given that the MGB already has a geohazard map in place that pinpoints vulnerable areas in the country, Yamsuan said.

He said information sources in creating the disaster map should not be limited to scientific instrument-based data but should also utilize a holistic approach by including, among others, indigenous peoples’ knowledge.

The bill provides for a nationwide information drive; training programs for local officials, disaster response teams, and community leaders; and other similar efforts to ensure the disaster map’s accessibility and proper use.

## DAILY TRIBUNE

### [\\$500-M ADB loan targets resilience](#)

By: Kathryn Jose

The government obtained a \$500-million loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) which it seeks to use in implementing processes for disaster resilience and health emergency programs.

In a statement on Wednesday, ADB said the loan is part of the Second Disaster Resilience Improvement Program.

“The Philippines is one of the fastest-growing economies in Southeast Asia but is at high risk for earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, rising sea levels and flooding,” ADB director for the Philippines Pavit Ramachandran said.

The Philippines showed the highest disaster risk out of 193 countries in the World Risk Report 2024.

ADB shared that Filipinos experience an average of 20 typhoons per year and up to 150 earthquakes in various magnitudes within the same period.

5-year term for loan

The new loan is consumable within five years and renewable after that period, as long as some of the funds remain unused.

With the additional funds, ADB expects the government to effectively implement the Philippines’ Public Financial Management Roadmap. This includes strategies on the efficient distribution of national and local funds for disaster resilience and health emergencies.

“With this program, we aim to strengthen policies and frameworks, and attain long-term resilience to lessen the impact of disasters, especially to the most vulnerable sectors,” Ramachandran said.

Aside from the country’s archipelagic nature and inclusion in the Ring of Fire, the Philippines is facing the impacts of climate change which intensifies typhoons and drought.

According to the 2023 Sustainability Report of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, natural disasters damaged agricultural goods and infrastructure worth P24.4 billion.



## **GMA NEWS**

### **Marcos to lawyers: Protect rights amid cybercrimes, climate crisis**

By: Joviland Rita

President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. encouraged lawyers Thursday to protect human dignity and rights with the emergence of cybercrimes and climate crisis.

In his speech during the 20th National Convention of Lawyers in Cebu City, Marcos said that lawyers should lead to resolve challenges in the digital world.

“In this era of technological advancements, economic transformations, and global interdependence, you stand at the forefront of an unprecedentedly dynamic and therefore challenging landscape. The emergence of issues such as cybercrime, data privacy, and the ethical use of artificial intelligence presents not only technical dilemmas but moral ones as well,” he said.

“And therefore, they demand our continued commitment to protect human dignity in an increasingly digital world,” he added.

Marcos also pointed out the role of lawyers in developing environmental policies amid the climate crisis.

“Equally pressing is the existential challenge of our time: and that is the climate crisis. This is no longer an abstract threat that is spoken about at a high level of science. It is a reality that jeopardizes the very survival of future generations,” he said.

“Your field plays a vital role in this endeavor, crafting and upholding stronger environmental policies that protect our shared home, developing the concept of environmental justice. By doing so, you safeguard the rights of today and preserve the dreams and dignity of those that will follow us,” he added.

The President commended the Unified Legal Aid Service Rules that requires lawyers to render at least 60 hours of pro bono legal aid every three years for indigent Filipinos.

He also lauded the Integrated Bar of the Philippines' (IBP) for its free legal assistance, new Secure Justice Hubs, and Pro Bono Portal.

“We must embrace a simple but profound truth: The law must serve all Filipinos—not just a privileged few. Justice must find its way to the margins, where it is most needed, reaching the underserved, the unseen, and the unheard,” Marcos said.

“After all, the Constitution is meant to be wielded with purpose and compassion, especially for those who need it the most,” he added.

## MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

### Ending fossil fuel dependence

By: Raymond Africa

A move to free the country from dependence on fossil-based systems and shifting to renewable sources of energy to reduce greenhouse (GHG) emissions is being pushed at the Senate.

The Energy Transition Act (Senate Bill No. 157) proposes the establishment of a framework for introducing and institutionalizing fundamental policies on energy transition, including the promotion of clean energy sources, decreasing use of fossil-based sources of energy, and delineation of responsibilities among various government agencies in the transport and power sectors.

Citing data from energy think tank Ember, bill author filed by Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian said a measure for transitioning to renewable energy sources is needed so that the country can come up with an energy transition plan that would push it closer to its green energy goals.

He said the Ember data showed that the Philippines has surpassed Indonesia and China in terms of dependence on coal-fired power as the country's share of local electricity generation rose for the 15th straight year in 2023 despite the target of cutting dependence on the fuel to less than half of total power output by the year 2030.

He said the proposed measure provides for the creation of an energy transition plan to achieve the phaseout of fossil fuel plants and net zero emissions in the year 2050.

"The Philippine Energy Plan (2020-2040) fails to provide a clear energy transition framework given the country's NDC (nationally determined contributions) and the aforementioned policies laid out in RA 7638 (The Department of Energy Act of 1992), RA 9136 (Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001), and RA 9513 (Renewable Energy Act of 2008).

In April 2021, the Philippines communicated its updated NDC to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. It commits to a projected GHG emission reduction and avoidance of 75 percent, of which 2.71 percent is unconditional and 72.29 percent is conditional, representing the country's ambition for GHG mitigation for the period 2020 to 2030 for the sectors of agriculture, wastes, industry, transport and energy," Gatchalian said in the bill's explanatory note.

He said the Climate Change Commission will be tapped to lead the implementation of the measure through the creation and implementation of an Energy Transition Plan with the assistance of government agencies such as the Department of Energy, Department of Transportation, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Department of Finance, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Agriculture, Department of Labor and Employment, Securities and Exchange Commission, and Energy Regulatory Commission.

Gatchalian said the transition plan will be the basis for a comprehensive framework in the exploration, development, utilization, and distribution of energy sources, and resilience and upgrading of energy infrastructures in support of the country's shift from fossil-based systems of energy production and consumption to clean energy sources.

## NATIONAL TARGETS

Under the proposed act, Gatchalian said, the agencies will implement a moratorium on the establishment of new fossil fuel power plants, and sale of new internal combustion engine vehicles within the timeframe to be determined by the Energy Transition Plan.

Phaseout of fossil fuel power plants and internal combustion engine vehicles as determined by the Energy Transition Plan will also be in effect.

Gatchalian said the national government agencies will also increase the share of clean energy sources in the energy mix of the country while taking into account the moratorium on new fossil fuel power plants and phaseout of existing ones in the end in view of reducing GHG emissions.

“Under the principle of just transition, the TWG (technical working group), in approving the ETP (Energy Transition Plan) and its implementation, shall ensure a fair and inclusive energy transition by minimizing its negative impacts on communities that are reliant on fossil-based system of production and utilization. This shall include labor programs which include conduct of trainings for employees that are under the fossil-based system of production and utilization industries prior the implementation of this Act to ensure their continuous employment, if practicable, and to protect their rights and benefits in accordance with the existing labor laws and rules and regulations,” Gatchalian said in the bill.

“Through this bill, it is hoped that the country will be able to comply with its commitments under the Paris Agreement while ensuring that the transition shall be fair and inclusive,” he added.

## **Philippines allocates P1 trillion for climate change initiatives in 2025**

By: Angela Celis

The Marcos Jr. administration has allocated an unprecedented P1 trillion for climate change adaptation and mitigation measures in the 2025 National Expenditure Program (NEP), nearly double the P543.45 billion budgeted for the same purpose last year.

This significant increase signals the government's commitment to tackling the escalating challenges posed by climate change, which has increasingly threatened the country in recent years.

The results of the Climate Change Expenditure Tagging show that of the total amount intended for this year, P889.7 billion is allocated for adaptation programs and projects vis-a-vis the P130 billion for mitigation programs and projects.

The directive for Climate Change Expenditure Tagging is based on a joint memorandum circular of the DBM and the Climate Change Commission which aims to track, monitor and report programs that help address and alleviate problems posed by climate change.

Sought for comment on the significant increase in climate change allocation, the DBM said the the climate change expenditures under the 2025 NEP reached 16.1 percent share of the total proposed national budget, surpassing the the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028 target of nine percent.

"The increase in the climate change expenditures under the 2025 NEP is a manifestation of the resolve of the Administration to achieve the desired climate outcomes of the National Government as contained in the PDP 2023-2028," DBM Principal Economist Joselito Basilio told Malaya Business Insight on January 23.

"In addition, the significantly higher climate change expenditures in the 2025 NEP is also a result of a more active participation of national government agencies (NGAs) in the climate change expenditure tagging process," he added.

Basilio said that for instance, in the 2025 budget preparation process, 284 NGAs were able to determine and submit to the Climate Change Commission the climate change expenditures in their budget proposals, as compared to only 260 in the previous budget preparation process.

"The national government continues to prioritize the adaptation measure due to the vulnerability of the country to the impacts of climate change," Basilio said.

John Paolo Rivera, Philippine Institute for Development Studies Senior Research Fellow, said that while the doubling of the climate budget is a significant and commendable step forward for the Philippines, there is always room for improvement.

“Doubling the allocation to P1 trillion underscores the Philippine government’s recognition of the urgent need to address climate change. It is particularly significant for a country that ranks among the most climate-vulnerable nations globally,” Rivera told Malaya Business Insight last January 22.

“This move demonstrates a stronger commitment to adaptation and mitigation efforts. The substantial increase allows for larger-scale initiatives such as funding renewable energy projects to decarbonize the economy; strengthening disaster risk management and early warning systems, supporting agriculture and fisheries to adapt to changing climate patterns,” he added.

Rivera said the significant increase shows a serious commitment to addressing climate challenges and sets an example for other climate-vulnerable countries.

“However, maximizing the impact of this allocation requires ensuring effective implementation, tapping into international climate finance and fostering partnerships with the private sector,” Rivera said.

“Globally, while the Philippine’s commitment is strong, there is still room to improve its capacity to deliver results and integrate its efforts into the global climate agenda,” he added.

According to the Asian Development Bank’s (ADB) Country Climate Investment Plan attached in the agency’s Country Partnership Strategy (CPS): Philippines, 2024–2029 published in August 2024, the Philippines has made ambitious commitments on adaptation and mitigation, underpinned by a comprehensive policy framework to promote climate action.

The government submitted its first nationally determined contribution (NDC), under the Paris Agreement, in 2021 with a target of reducing GHG emissions by 75 percent below a cumulative business as usual pathway for 2020–2030.

The bank, however, said that despite strong policy direction and support for successive administrations, implementation continues to face several challenges.

“There is a lack of coherence across the governance structure for climate action in the Philippines, both in terms of coordination of climate action and implementation at the sector. Awareness and prioritization of climate action varies across sectors, and at the local government level,” the ADB said.

“A stocktake of progress made under the National Climate Change Action Plan 2011–2028 and an assessment of climate governance showed that climate actions have not yet been adequately resourced, systematically rolled out, and aligned across sectors and between national and local governments. A similar picture can be seen for other environmental challenges, including air quality where the legislation is in place but challenges with implementation and enforcement remain,” it added.

Under the CPS 2024–2029, ADB said it will aim to intensify climate action in the Philippines, and to mobilize \$10 billion in climate finance to support the implementation of the NDC and National Adaptation Plan.

“ADB will address climate action at upstream (policy), midstream (institutions and planning) and downstream (projects and investment) levels, and will leverage strong relationships with implementing agencies to drive climate action in key sectors,” the bank said.

“Climate support will maximize opportunities to promote co-benefits for broader environmental sustainability (e.g. biodiversity and ecosystem management, pollution control and resource efficiency),” it added.

The multilateral agency said key policy reforms will be supported to enable strategic investments to strengthen the country’s climate and disaster resilience, ensuring just transition and gender inclusion.

Meanwhile, concessional climate finance will be mobilized to enable transformative investments, particularly for climate adaptation and biodiversity protection.

## POLITIKO

### [Better Disaster Response Needed: Yamsuan Bats For Passage Of Hazard Mapping Law](#)

By: Billy Begas

In a bid to enhance the country's disaster response, Bicol Saro party-list Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan urged Congress to pass a measure aimed at creating a national disaster map to help save lives and reduce losses from natural calamities.

Yamsuan said the map would contain the list of low-lying areas vulnerable to rising sea levels and communities at high risk for natural disasters.

"We cannot prevent the occurrences of typhoons, volcanic eruptions, and other natural phenomena, aggravated by the added threat of climate change. But it is possible to mitigate their impact by adopting science-based strategies. These include creating a national disaster map that would help communities, especially coastal areas, prepare for, and lessen the devastating effects of these disasters," Yamsuan said.

The record-breaking severe typhoon season last year highlights the urgency of passing the measure, the solon added.

Yamsuan said the impact of typhoons Kristine and Leon in the Bicol region reached P2.9 billion, almost half of the nearly P6 billion total losses in the agriculture sector reported nationwide.

Under HB 11205, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through the National Mapping and Resources Information Authority (NAMRIA) and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), is tasked to provide and issue a national disaster map of the Philippines with the assistance from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA), Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).

The disaster map will identify low-lying areas vulnerable to rising sea levels as a result of climate change; areas of high risk for natural disasters; and "shall contain proper identification of lands bordering sea levels, exposed to volcanic eruption and lying on earthquake faults."

The map should also include the criteria for evacuation and an illustration of recommended evacuation sites and routes.



At present, the MGB already has a geohazard map in place that pinpoints vulnerable areas in the country, Yamsuan noted.

The measure also provides for a nationwide information drive, training programs for local officials, disaster response teams, and community leaders, and other similar efforts to ensure the disaster map's accessibility and proper use.

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