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WITHOUT FEAR ▫ WITHOUT FAVOR

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Additional DA funding sought

BY EDJEN OLIQUINO
@tribunephl_eao

A neophyte lawmaker has appealed to the House of Representatives to allocate an additional P521 million for the Department of Agriculture aside from the its P163.75 billion proposed budget for next year.

A known advocate of agriculture in the lower chamber, Representative Wilbert Lee, wrote a letter to the House Committee on Appropriations, requesting funding for the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture's targeted activities, such as complete profiling of farmers and fisherfolks, georeferencing of 846,000 hectares in addition to the approved 353,800 hectares and upgrading of the Information and Communications Technology network.

"It is crucial that farmers and fisherfolks register to the RSBSA so they can access DA's services," Lee said on Monday.

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. is the concurrent head of the DA.

Marcos earlier said that the move to head the agriculture department will "make it clear to everyone what a high priority we put on the agriculture sector."

According to Lee, the farmers are complaining about their unclaimed assistance, or *ayuda*, due to erroneous and mismatched data from their municipality's RSBSA listings.

The lawmaker, meanwhile, stressed that the sought additional funds are required to complete the integration of other agri-fishery databases, such as the Philippine Coconut Authority's National Coconut Farmers Registry and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources' Municipal Fisherfolk Registry.

During Lee's interpellation on the DA's proposed 2023 budget, the agency confirmed that farmers and fisherfolks must be registered with the RSBSA to receive *ayuda* from DA programs.

The sought funding increase, according to the legislator, would be utilized to fully link the RSBSA with other national government agencies for data harmonization, such as the Philippine Identification System and Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries of the Department of Agrarian Reform.

The Manila Times®

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Spike in pork prices 'artificial'

THE agricultural group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (Sinag) on Tuesday said that the spike in the retail prices of meat products is artificial as it blamed the traders and middlemen for price manipulation in the markets.

In a radio interview, Sinag President Rosendo So noted that the farmgate price of pork remains stable at P175 per kilo compared to the prevailing market price of P300 per kilo.

"We are surprised at the increase of the retail prices of pork products as the farmgate price is still at P175 per kilo. It should be sold to the retailers to at least P250 per kilo and at most, the retail price should be P280 per kilo. But at present, pork *kasim* is now pegged at P300 per kilo in the local markets," So said.

He added that the movement in the prices of meat products should happen in December due to the increase in demand.

"Normally, the increase is expected in December. It's only October and yet, we already monitored movement in the retail prices of meat products," So added.

He said that the retail price of pork kasim is now at P300 per kilo, while pork *liempo* ranges between P340 and P360 per kilo.

So added that the farmgate price of chicken is pegged at P105 per kilo.

"The retail price of chicken should be at P160 per kilo but based on our monitoring, the prevailing price is now pegged between P180 [and] P185 per kilo. Somebody is manipulating the prices," he said.

So added that the Department of Agriculture (DA) should address the issue amid warnings that the retail price of pork could go as high as P400 per kilo.

"The DA should monitor the retail prices to determine the cause of the artificial increase," he said.

At the same time, So said there is no need for the government to import more pork this year, since at least 89 million kilos of imported pork products remain in various cold storage facilities.

He said the country's inventory for imported frozen chicken is at least 42 million kilos.

The retail price of frozen pork products is pegged between P240 and P250 per kilo, lower by P30 to P40 per kilo compared to the locally produced.

"While the value of the dollar is increasing, we source 35 percent of our imported pork products from Spain. The exchange rate of Spain remains stable," So said.

He added that at least 6 to 7 percent of the country's pork supply comes from the United States.

Based on the DA market monitoring on Tuesday, the retail price of pork kasim is pegged between P270 and P350 per kilo; pork liempo, from P300 to P390 per kilo; and whole chicken, from P160 to P200 per kilo.

BELLA CARIASO

October 5, 2022

BusinessMirror

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editorial

Protecting the Pinoy consumer

THE peso averaged P49.2546 against the greenback in 2021, according to data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP). A year ago, the peso averaged P50.7491 against the US dollar in October and P50.2478 in December. For the whole of 2021, inflation averaged 3.9 percent, based on historical data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

As of end-August, PSA data indicated that headline inflation rate has already averaged 4.9 percent, surpassing the 2021 figure. The highest rate was recorded in July, when it reached 6.4 percent. The August print also breached the 6-percent mark largely on higher food prices and transportation costs.

For September, the BSP projected that inflation could exceed 7 percent due to the high cost of food and electricity as well as the peso depreciation ***(See, "Peso decline and high cost of food, electricity may drive inflation beyond 7% in Sept.—BSP," in the BUSINESSMIRROR, September 30, 2022).*** The weakening of the peso is a significant factor in the acceleration of inflation as the country is an importer of fuel and a number of food items, including rice. If the BSP forecast materializes, it would be the first time in years that Philippine inflation would breach 7 percent. Unfortunately, the worst is not yet over for the Philippine peso. Efforts of the US Federal Reserve to tame inflation would mean a stronger dollar, which could further weaken the peso. What this means for the Philippines, at least in the next few months, is more expensive imported items.

This development is taking place at a time when the celebration of the Christmas season has already started in the country. Christmas is one of the favorite holidays of Filipinos and businesses, particularly those in the retail and the food and beverage sectors, which benefit from the bonanza brought about by the so-called "ber" months. Demand during this period is so strong that consumption spending significantly boosts the country's GDP growth.

Brisk demand during this period, however, would prove to be a bane for the Philippines this time around, as this could cause consumer prices to rise faster. Even local food items are also becoming more expensive due to the higher price of inputs, such as fuel and fertilizer, as well as the surging cost of transportation. The depreciation of the peso has contributed significantly to the increase in the prices of local foodstuff as the Philippines imports all of its chemical fertilizer requirements.

There are mechanisms in place to ensure that traders will not take undue advantage of the peso depreciation and the spike in imported commodities like oil. One of this is a food supply chain program initiated by the Department of Agriculture, which allows consumers to buy cheaper produce from the so-called Kadiwa outlets. It would do well for the government to expand this scheme to allow more consumers to have access to more affordable food items. It's also about time that government has to step up its campaign against profiteers and see to it that traders do not take undue advantage of hapless consumers, particularly those in typhoon-hit areas.

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Govs push review of Rice Tariffication law, return of NFA's regulatory power

By Manuel T. Cayon @awimailbox
Mindanao Bureau Chief

DAVAO CITY—Some members of the League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP) are poised to ask the national government to review the Rice Tariffication law and to return the regulatory powers of the National Food Authority (NFA).

This came out in the discussion of issues and concerns of local governments during the second General Assembly of the LPP held in Koronadal City, South Cotabato, from September 30 to October 1.

North Cotabato Gov. Emmylou "Lala" Taliño Mendoza Dumalo confirmed to reporters in the venue that the LPP Committee on Agriculture and Food has made recommendations to the assembly to address the concern of farmers and the agriculture sector in the country.

Among the recommendations were a review to be made on the Rice Tariffication law and to return the regulatory powers of the NFA.

Mendoza said the Rice Tariffication law must be reviewed to ensure that its avowed objective to bring down the price of rice will be attained. "This did not happen in current situation," she said.

South Cotabato Gov. Reynaldo S. Tamayo Jr., the current LPP president, also confirmed the discussions of the Committee on Agriculture and Food.

In his Facebook page, Tamayo reported that "taken up during the meeting was the report of and recommendations made during the first meeting of the LPP Committee on Agriculture, headed by Isabela Gov. Rodolfo Albano III, on the strategies that rice-producing provinces may take to increase local productivity and ensure food sufficiency in line with the President's priority for agriculture and food sufficiency."

Secretary Benjamin D. Abalos Jr. of the Department of the Interior and Local Government graced the occasion and discussed varied issues, including his appeal to local governments to come up with their respective proposals in a planned amendment to the Local Government Code.

He said the proposals would be consolidated and presented to a special joint body composed of the DILG and the respective Committees on Local Government of the Senate and House of Representatives.

These committees would fast-track legislative actions to amend RA 7160, or the Local Government Code.

His appeal for proposals was contained in his dialog with the provincial chief executives. Abalos emphasized three major points: strengthening of the Regional Development Councils in the determination of national projects and its alignment with local development directions; the enhancement of Executive Order 138 on full devolution; and to step up the Covid-19 immunization program in provinces where the coverage still remains low.

EO 138, he said is still undergoing review process by the DILG.

In his Facebook post, Tamayo added that the governors also discussed other important concerns such as: the need for greater vigilance especially by the BJMP (Bureau of Jail Management and Penology) and PNP (Philippine National Police) to ensure that jails are not used for venues of illegal drugs; implementing existing laws and policies on prior consultation with LCEs (local chief executives) on key appointments by national government to LGUs such as the police directors; current challenges in the completion of Conditional Matching Grant to Provinces (CMGP) projects whose implementation were disrupted due to the pandemic.

Gov. Mendoza has raised the CMGP issue during the governors' session as she emphasized that this should continue "because of its big help to maintain the roads."

The CMGP, formerly called Kalsada program, was intended for repair, rehabilitate and improve roads. This is a partnership program between the DILG and Department of Budget Management "for provincial LGUs in response to the needed infrastructure support, as well as reforms in local roads management and public financial management," the DILG said in its web site.

Tamayo said that "now is the best time for LGUs to have a bigger voice in the administration of President Bongbong Marcos, who was a former full-term governor himself."

"This could be done through a show of unity among all governors and provinces to push for national development, by getting out of the box and showcasing each other's good practices and consider them for replication so that greater attention be given to LGUs," he added.

He said the LPP would propose to Malacañang to allocate at least 20 percent of the National Expenditure Program to development projects proposed by LGUs.

The governors were feted to presentation of the best practices of South Cotabato provincial government, a tour of key destinations such as the first of the 7 Falls of Lake Sebu, a cruise along Lake Sebu and a view of Mt. Matutum.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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GOTCHA

JARIUS BONDOC

More seized onions being sold: A decoy for bigger smuggling

Smuggled onions supposedly seized by Customs in northeastern Mindanao were sold not only in Davao City. New documents obtained by *GOTCHA* show that part of the contraband reached Surigao del Norte earlier. Attempts were made to ship it to Tacloban in eastern Visayas.

The stink involves three regions. But it can be a mere decoy, said a Malacañang official familiar with trafficking. Distractions accompany the entry of bigger contraband. The Palace has been informed of a scheme involving 1,700 cargo containers of illegal agricultural produce. Some of the containers are already in Manila.

Agriculture Department fieldmen in Mindanao interdicted 12,000 kilos of smuggled onions in land transit. They alerted Customs counterparts in the Caraga Region. The latter apparently were unaware that Customs officers in Cagayan de Oro International Port, in adjacent Region X, had let contraband be sneaked out of custody.

Details are in a Sept. 5 memo of Bureau of Plant Industry regional manager Rayme Ladao to Customs-Surigao City district collector Jonah Herbert Dollano:

"BPI-Plant Quarantine Service-Region 13 (Caraga) ha[s] intercepted and confiscated fresh yellow onions total[ing] 12,000 kilos from Cagayan de Oro City. Said consignment was believed to be smuggled since the shipper cannot present any legal documents. Per memorandum dated Aug. 12, 2022 from our Director [Gerald Glenn Panganiban], there is no Sanitary/Phytosanitary Import Clearance for fresh yellow and red onions.

"The consignment was transported Sept. 3 via Lipata Ferry Terminal to Tacloban City. It was apprehended and returned to origin; however, today Sept. 5, the shipment was transferred to different vehicle and was attempted to cross Visayas Island via Surigao Baseport. Our inspector there alerted the Port Police to disallow loading onto the vessel.

"We seek your recommendation/actions on this matter."

Customs-CdO had seized 22 40-footer cargo containers of Chinese onion on July 7, 19, 22 and 29. Mis-declared as butter and spring roll patty, all were consigned to Frankie Trading Enterprises and Primex Export-Import Producer, Customs Manila central office announced. A container carries up to 28,000 kilos. With each container valued at P3 million, total catch was P66 million.

CdO District Collector Elvira Cruz confiscated the shipments. Acting Customs Commissioner Yogi Ruiz, in press releases from Manila headquarters, trumpeted the accomplishments.

Documents, videos and photos earlier provided to *GOTCHA* dwell on the July 22 seizure of seven containers. A committee condemned the onions on Aug. 20, since there was no BPI Sanitary/Phytosanitary Import Clearance. A condemnator was contracted to crush and bury the onions. But instead of doing so, the condemnator transferred the contents of six containers to wing vans on Sept. 18 and marketed them in Davao City. His identity is in Customs records.

BPI-Region-10 supervising agriculturist Manuel Barradas warned: "We don't know what pest and disease these might bring that would infect our other crops here in Mindanao. This would also pose human risk because we don't know what preservatives or chemicals they used. This is a hazard to our consumers."

Yellow onion retails for P600 a kilo. Thus, the contents of the six containers had a market value of P100.8 million.

Now it turns out that part of the earlier seizures had also been taken out of Customs for sale in Caraga and Tacloban five days ahead. The 12,000 intercepted kilos had a market value of P7.2 million. Agri-smuggling is done in cahoots with crooked Customs officials, then-Senate president Tito Sotto said in investigative hearings in April-June.

Requesting anonymity for now, the Malacañang source shared info on the 1,700 containers in transit and already at the piers:

• The China produce were contracted in February at P50:$1. With the peso devalued 20 percent since then, the importer is demanding that the suppliers charge him 20 percent less too. Rejected by the former, he threatens to have his cargoes "abandoned," for confiscation by Customs.

• Customs will then auction the abandoned wares. Front men of the importer will be made to win the rigged low bidding. Regaining the contraband, he will then sell high. Victims will be consumers and domestic producers. Government will lose revenues.

• Division of proceeds: for every five containers, three will go to the importer, two to Customs accomplices.

Word reached the Malacañang source that a high Customs official fumed at *GOTCHA*'s exposé last Wednesday of the recycled onions. That shows insincerity, the Palace insider said.

"He should even be thankful for the free intelligence tip you gave in your column," the source added. "He did not have to spend his intel and confidential budget to learn the modus operandi in CdO. If he knows what he's doing, he should get the condemnator's identity from Customs files. Also, the officers and guards on duty when the contraband was sneaked out. Then make them talk."

* * *

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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Cebu town reclamation hits another snag

Application to reclaim 235 hectares in Consolacion's coastal village sent back to local gov't; groups opposing project say it's victory for environment

By Ador Vincent Mayol
@inquirervisayas

CEBU CITY—The 235.8-hectare reclamation project in Consolacion town, Cebu, has hit another snag.

The Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) returned the municipality government's application for an environmental compliance certificate (ECC), one of the requirements before a dump-and-fill project could move forward.

The failure of the town to submit additional requirements within the prescribed period was the main reason cited by the DENR for returning the application on Sept. 1.

The Inquirer tried to reach Consolacion Mayor Teresa Alegado, but she did not respond to phone calls or text messages on Tuesday. Dr. Nerito Martinez, a project consultant for Consolacion, declined to issue a statement when contacted by the Inquirer through phone.

Alegado and her predecessor, son Joannes, have been pushing to reclaim 235.8 ha of seawater, including the foreshore area, which the local government planned to transform into an economic and tourism hub called "Seafront City."

The project was in partnership with a private consortium, La Consolacion Seafront Development Corp., which was incorporated in October 2019 with a capital investment of P10 million, based on records of the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Environmentalist groups, including Oceana Philippines, opposed the project, citing its "irreversible" impact on the environment as it would not only mean destroying marine resources but also leveling mountains where rocks and soil would be taken as filling materials.

PROTECTING FISHING GROUND Fishermen in Consolacion, Cebu, and their supporters hold a fluvial parade in October 2021 to oppose a reclamation project backed by the local government, which they say will destroy their fishing grounds. —CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

In a Sept. 20 letter to Gloria Estenzo Ramos, vice president of Oceana Philippines, EMB Central Visayas director William Cuñado said the draft environmental impact satement (EIS) for the project was returned to the municipality.

Incomplete

Cuñado cited Department Administrative Order No. 2003-30, where the EMB would have to return the application if the proponent failed to submit additional information within the required period.

The proponent has 18 months to reapply with the additional information without having to pay processing and other fees. Otherwise, the matter would be treated as a new application.

The EMB said proponents of the Consolacion reclamation project had incomplete response to the additional information requested by the Environmental Impact Assessment Review Committee during the first meeting as well as issues raised by shipyard owners, Oceana and other groups opposing the project.

The local government also did not present full documentation of the public hearing, including the attendance of stakeholders and the general public; information shared and how it was disseminated to various groups; summary of issues raised that were beyond the mandate of the EMB; and transcription and video documentation of the proceedings of the public hearing, among others.

Ramos, who represents Oceana, the largest international advocacy organization focused on ocean conservation, welcomed the decision of EMB.

"Consolacion, led by its mayor, should prioritize complying with its mandate of environmental protection under the Constitution, Local Government Code, Fisheries Code, and other related laws and regulations, and ensure that the strict legal/procedural requirements are met through environmental impact assessment and inclusion of stakeholders, including fisherfolk and coastal communities from the initiatory stage and onwards," she told the Inquirer.

"This is a victory resulting from the strong collaboration among stakeholders from various sectors and communities, including those from government, such as the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) central office which directed the regional director to withdraw its controversial letter of no objection (Lono)."

Notice

In March 2022, the BFAR in Central Visayas recalled its decision to issue a Lono to Consolacion, which would have attested that no marine ecosystem would be affected by its proposed project.

But fishermen from Consolacion and those from the neighboring cities of Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu protested, saying they had been fishing in the waters off Barangay Tayud, the proposed reclamation site.

Allan Poquita, the BFAR regional director, later recalled the Lono, explaining that the regional office had no authority to issue the document.

Environmental lawyer Liza Osorio considered the actions of the BFAR and EMB-DENR as "mini victories" in the fight against the reclamation project in Consolacion.

"This really puts all local governments and proponents of dump-and-fill projects on notice that they must comply with all environmental safeguards in our laws as there are now strict accountability measures in place," she said.

Osorio, legal and policy director of Oceana Philippines, said the pronouncement of former President Rodrigo Duterte to stop processing applications for reclamation projects in the country must be followed by the executive agencies unless lifted.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government has also ordered all local governments to seriously uphold their critical role in protecting the environment and complying with the safeguards provided by existing laws and regulations. INQ

BusinessWorld

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Fuel subsidy distributed to 10,000 farmers, fisherfolk in Soccsksargen

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) is currently distributing a tranche of the fuel subsidy to nearly 10,000 registered farmers and fisherfolk in Soccsksargen.

"One of the most substantial operational expenses in farming and fishing is fuel," the DA said in a statement.

As of Sept. 27, oil companies have raised the price of fuel by a net P14.85 per liter for gasoline in the year to date. The corresponding increases in other types of fuel are P29.40 per liter for diesel, and P24.10 per liter for kerosene.

The most recent price action late last month was a decrease in the gasoline price by P1.65-P1.75, in the diesel price by P1.25, and in the kerosene price by P1.35.

Corn farmers and fisherfolk are eligible for fuel discounts of 30%, with discounts capped at P3,000, via Universal Storefront Services Corp., a local partner of the DA.

The DA said it is also actively encouraging farmers and fisherfolk in the region to modernize and boost productivity.

"To assist them, more than P49 million is set aside for corn farmers and fishermen in Soccsksargen through the fuel discount program which aims to extend assistance to farmers and fishermen who own agricultural or fishing machinery, either individually or through organizations," it added.

A corn farmer must be registered under the Farmers and Fisherfolk Registry System to be eligible for the fuel subsidy.

Eligible fisherfolk must also be registered, with the upper limit of boat size set at 3 gross tons. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

Malaya
Business Insight

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Auditors flag 'excessive' hiring of contractual workers in DA

BY PETER TABINGO

THE Department of Agriculture's Central Office (CO), three attached agencies, and a regional office have been flagged by the Commission on Audit for excessive expenditure on the hiring of contract of service (COS) and job order (JO) personnel in 2021.

The 2021 audit of the DA showed that the Central Office and 19 attached offices hired a total of 10,095 JO/COS during the year and shelled out P3.665 billion for their wages.

Auditors said the excessive hiring were found in DA Central Office, Bureau of Agricultural and Fisheries Engineering (BAFE), Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR), Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM), Regional Field Office 10 in Cagayan de Oro City.

"The number of COS/JO personnel hired during the year exceeded the number of filled positions for regular employees [in the Central Office] by 129 or 124.16 percent," the COA said even as it lauded the appointment of 62 qualified contractual employees to permanent positions.

In the BAFE, auditors noted that of the 71 available plantilla positions, only 48 were filled up and only three former COS/JO workers were signed up for regularization.

For BAR, the number of COS hires exceeded the filled-up positions by 54 percent while in RFO 10, the COA issued notices of suspension for non-submission of disbursement vouchers on the hiring of COS/JO.

The commission reminded the DA and its attached offices that COS/JO personnel should be prioritized in the hiring for available staff posts in the agency if they meet the required eligibility as mandated under the Civil Service Commission – Commission on Audit – Department of Budget and Management Join Circular No. 1 s. 2017.

The COA audit showed that among the biggest spender on non-permanent hires were the DA Regional Field Office (RFO) 4B with P1.527 billion (569 JO/COS), the Philippine Rural Development Project (PRDP) with P390.31 million (544 hires), DA Central Office with P219.06 million (663 hires), RFO 2 with P188.85 million (882 hires), RFO 6 with P156.975 million (801 hires), RFO 3 with P127.67 million (613 hires), and RFO 5 with P124.675 million (789 hires).

PEOPLES JOURNAL Tonight

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Solon calls for addt'l P521M for DA under GAB

By RYAN PONCE PACPACO

To improve RSBSA, 'ayuda' to agri workers

A LAWMAKER has appealed to House leadership to provide an additional P521-M in the budget of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in House Bill No. 4488 or the General Appropriations Bill (GAB) to streamline the effectivity of the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA).

In his letter to the House committee on appropriations, AGRI Party-list Representative Wilbert T. Lee sought more funding for the targeted activities of the RSBSA, such as the complete profiling of farmers and fisherfolks, georeferencing of 846,000 hectares on top of the approved 353,800 hectares, and upgrading of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) network.

"It is crucial that farmers and fisherfolks register to the RSBSA so they can access DA's services. Sa pag-iikot ko sa mga probinsya, isa ito sa laging reklamo ng mga magsasaka. Kung hindi mali ang datos, yung iba, sa tagal man ng hinintay sa ayuda, hindi rin pala makakatanggap dahil wala sila sa listahan o hindi magkapareho yung nasa RSBSA sa listahan ng munisipyo," Lee said.

"The requested additional amount is needed to complete the integration of other agri-fishery databases, such as the National Coconut Farmers Registry of the Philippine Coconut Authority and the Municipal Fisherfolk Registry of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources," he added.

During Lee's interpellation on the proposed 2023 budget of the DA, the agency confirmed that farmers and fisherfolks must be registered to the RSBSA to receive their "ayuda" from the programs of the DA.

According to Lee, the requested increase in funding will also be used to fully integrate RSBSA with other national government agencies for data harmonization purposes, such as the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) and the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

"Fixing the RSBSA will be essential in ensuring that farmers and fisherfolks even from the most remote regions of our country get the assistance they need, especially during these trying times," Lee stated.

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NIA completes solar-powered projects in Ecija, Bulacan

By STEVE A. GOSUICO

CABANATUAN CITY – More solar powered-pump irrigation projects are now being constructed to benefit the local farmers in line with the innovation and modernization thrusts of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) under the leadership of Administrator Benny D. Antiporda.

This is after the NIA-Upper Pampanga River Integrated Irrigation Systems (UPRIIS) office based here announced the completion of five solar-powered projects worth a total of P58.32-million in Nueva Ecija and Bulacan.

The five completed projects were the: P9.23-million SPPI in Talavera under Division 2 manager Engr. Alvin S. Manuel Jr.; the three SPPIs under Division 4 manager Engr. Wilfredo A. Balauro, P14.19-million SPPI in Gapan, Nueva Ecija, P15.23-million SPPI in San Miguel, Bulacan, and the P14.98-million SPPI in San Ildefonso, Bulacan; and the P4.69-million project in Bgy. Bagong Sikat, San Jose City which the Division 5 office implemented under Engr. Rogelio C. Macatula.

UPRIIS head Engr. Rosalinda B. Bote said these projects were implemented amid efforts by the agency to provide an efficient, effective, and sustainable irrigation service for the highest satisfaction of its main clientele – the local farmers.

She said the construction of eight other solar-powered pump irrigation projects funded under the 2022 General Appropriations Act (GAA) is also underway and nearing completion.

Bote said these projects worth a total of over P180.68-million are being targeted to provide additional irrigation water service to about 377 hectares of rice lands, benefiting some 504 farmers serviced by UPRIIS.

She said: "the putting up of these solar-powered pump irrigation projects was a continuation of the agency's pioneering projects implemented last year aimed to foster proficiency and resiliency for proficient irrigation service through innovation and modernization."

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Funding for DA's RSBSA projects sought

ADDITIONAL budget for the Department of Agriculture is needed to to streamline the effectivity of the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA).

This was according to AGRI Party-list Rep. Wilbert T. Lee, as he called on Congress to provide an additional P521-M in the budget of the DA under the n House Bill No. 4488 or the General Appropriations Bill (GAB).

In his letter to the Committee on appropriations, Lee sought more funding for the targeted activities of the RSBSA such as the complete profiling of farmers and fisherfolks, georeferencing of 846,000 hectares on top of the approved 353,800 hectares, and upgrading of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) network. "It is crucial that farmers and fisherfolk register to the RSBSA so they can access DA's services. Sa pag-iikot ko sa mga probinsya, isa ito sa laging reklamo ng mga magsasaka. Kung hindi mali ang datos, yung iba, sa tagal man ng hinintay sa ayuda, hindi rin pala makakatanggap dahil wala sila sa listahan o hindi magkapareho yung nasa RSBSA sa listahan ng munisipyo," Lee said.

"The requested additional amount is needed to complete the integration of other agri-fishery databases, such as the National Coconut Farmers Registry of the Philippine Coconut Authority and the Municipal Fisherfolk Registry of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources," he added.

The department has confirmed that farmers and fisherfolk must be registered to the RSBSA to receive their ayuda from the programs of the DA.

According to Lee, the requested increase in funding will also be used to fully integrate RSBSA with other national government agencies for data harmonization purposes such as the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) and the Agrarian Reform Beneficiaries of the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR).

"Fixing the RSBSA will be essential in ensuring that farmers and fisherfolks even from the most remote regions of our country get the assistance they need especially during these trying times," Lee stated.

"Kapag naabot ang mga matagal nang napagkakaitan ng serbisyo, mabibigyan sila ng dahilan para maging produktibo. Tataas ang kanilang kompiyansa, aarangkada ang agrikultura at ekonomiya. Walang maiiwan. Walang dehado. Walang agrabyado. Winner Tayo Lahat," Lee stated.

Prior to this, Lee inquired on the need to digitize RSBSA for faster and more accurate encoding of information in the database.

Jester Manalastas

Daily Tribune
WITHOUT FEAR ▪ WITHOUT FAVOR

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PCG collars 4 Vietnamese poachers

The use of cyanide in fishing is prohibited in the country, as the chemical kills coral polyps and algae, turning many coral reefs – the 'rainforests of the oceans' – into marine deserts

BY RAFFY AYENG
@tribunephl_raf

Four Vietnamese caught in the act of using sodium cyanide in fishing which is prohibited by Philippine laws were collared by the joint forces of the Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine Navy and Philippine National Police-Maritime Group in Pag-Asa Island, Palawan a belated report from the PCG on Tuesday said.

The joint maritime law enforcement team also intercepted their fishing vessel locally known as *sampan*, a small boat commonly used in East Asia, typically with an oar or oars at the stern, equipped with a compressor.

The fishermen were informed that they violated Sections 91 and 92 of Republic Act 10654 or the "Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998."

Moreover, the PCG Dental Service-Palawan conducted a panoramic examination and confirmed that one of the four apprehended Vietnamese fishermen was a minor, specifically around 16 to 18 years old.

As of 3 October 2022, the four fishermen remained under the custody of the PCG District Palawan for further investigation and proper disposition, with assistance from the PCG Station Kalayaan and PCG Legal Unit-Palawan.

The use of cyanide in fishing is prohibited in the country, as the chemical kills coral polyps and algae, turning many coral reefs – the "rainforests of the oceans" – into marine deserts.

It is said that a square meter of the reef is destroyed for every live fish caught using cyanide, according to the International Marine Life Alliance of the Philippines.

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IFC's $6-B fund to boost global food crisis response

By Andrea E. San Juan

THE International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector arm of the World Bank Group, said it has launched a $6-billion financing facility to strengthen the private sector's ability to respond to the global food crisis and help support food production.

"A core part of the financing, which will be provided through the new Global Food Security Platform (the Platform), will support sustainable production and delivery of food stocks to countries affected by food instability," the IFC said in a statement on Tuesday.

The IFC also noted that support will aim at facilitating trade of food commodities, delivery of inputs to farmers, supporting efficient production in major origins, including Ukraine, and effective distribution of food products in destination countries.

Financing will also focus on long-term actions to improve the resilience of the global food system and lessen its climate and ecological footprint.

"This includes investing in increasing efficient crop production, improving access to fertilizers,

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greening fertilizer production and use, reducing crop loss and food waste, improving supply chain efficiency, and mitigating infrastructure bottlenecks," the IFC said.

It noted that the $6 billion will be used to support private sector companies along the food value chain by leveraging IFC's sectoral expertise in agribusiness, manufacturing, infrastructure, and technology, as well as the financial sector and trade finance.

"The private sector has an essential role to play in alleviating food insecurity and in creating lasting solutions. By strengthening supply chains and ensuring that people have access to and can grow affordable food, this initiative will contribute to building resilient food systems in the most vulnerable regions," IFC Managing Director Makhtar Diop said.

The IFC noted that the Platform will supplement the World Bank's commitment of $30 billion in response to the food crisis. IFC added that it is stepping up engagements with other partners, including development finance institutions, foundations, banks as well as a range of private companies, in order to mobilize collective action to address global food security challenges.

Since 1962, IFC has invested more than $3 billion in equity and loans for more than 100 private sector companies in the Philippines.

Some of IFC's commitments that included the Philippines were done with Ayala Corporation and e-commerce start-up Growsari.

IFC invested $100 million in the first social bond by Ayala Corporation in the health-care sector to help increase availability of much-needed affordable healthcare in the Philippines.

Meanwhile, the project with Growsari aimed to protect farmers, micro-retailers, and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that are especially vulnerable to economic shocks through the digital transformation of MSMEs.

In fiscal year 2021, IFC committed a record $31.5 billion to private companies and financial institutions in developing countries, leveraging the power of the private sector to end extreme poverty and boost shared prosperity as economies grapple with the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic.

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TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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Inflation likely rise to 7 % in September

By LAWRENCE AGCAOILI

Inflation likely accelerated to seven percent in September after slightly easing to 6.3 percent in August from 6.4 percent in July, according to Standard Chartered Bank.

Jonathan Koh, economist for Asia and the Philippines at Standard Chartered, said that the consumer price index (CPI) accelerated last month on higher food, electricity and transport prices.

Koh said that a low base effect and higher fish and vegetable prices could have boosted food inflation in September.

The economist said Typhoon Karding also likely contributed to higher food prices amid supply-side disruptions.

Likewise, he said higher electricity rates in areas serviced by Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) added to rising housing and utility costs. Power rates went up by 4.1 percent in September from a month earlier.

Furthermore, Koh said transport inflation likely continued to contribute significantly to inflation as fuel prices and transport services costs rose year-on-year.

"The latest round of fare hikes will further push up transport services costs in October," he said.

Koh said the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) would continue its tightening cycle by further hiking key policy rates until the end of the year to tame inflation and stabilize the peso.

"Overall, with inflation rising and broadening in the Philippines, the central bank is likely to remain hawkish and continue on its hiking path," Koh said.

Inflation averaged 4.9 percent from January to August, exceeding the central bank's two to four percent target.

The BSP has raised its inflation forecasts to 5.6 percent from the original target of 5.4 percent for this year and to 4.1 instead of four percent for next year.

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P5.5-M nasalanta ni 'Karding' sa Quezon

INFANTA, Quezon -- Umaabot sa P5.5-milyon ang halaga ng pinsalang tinamo ng Infanta, Quezon dahil sa Bagyong Karding, batay sa isinapublikong resulta ng Rapid Damage Assessment and Needs Analysis (RDANA) ng lokal na pamahalaan.

Agrikultura ang may pinakamalaking pinsala na mahigit P5.1-M, samantalang sa Public Infrastructure and Facilities ay sumira ang bagyo ng mahigit P460,000.

Batay sa ulat ng Office of the Municipal Agriculturist, pinakanaapektuhan ang crops partikular ang palay, high-value crops lalo na ang mga produktong prutas at gulay, at mga palaisdaan.

Wala namang naitalang pinsala sa livestock and poultry, gayundin sa mga bangka at kagamitang pangisda.

Umabot sa 230 kabahayan ang natukoy na partially-damaged, habang dalawa ang totally-damaged.

Walang naitalang casualty o namatay, nasugatan, naospital, o nawala sa Infanta dahil sa naturang super typhoon noong nakaraang linggo. *(Tony Sandoval)*

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ni MER LAYSON

PAGTATANIM NG LANZONES SA TIMBA

Ngayong araw na ito ay ise-share ko ang pagtatanim at pag-aalaga ng lanzones sa timba.

Ang lanzones na may scientific name na Lansium Parasiticum ay masarap, matamis at maasim-asim ang lasa at masustansiya.

Isa ang lanzones sa pangunahing fruit trees na tanim ng ating mga kababayan sa Southern Tagalog, partikular sa area ng Laguna, Batangas at Quezon.

Marami rin ang may tanim na Lanzones sa Davao Del Norte, Zamboanga Del Norte, Sulu, Camiguin at iba pang panig ng bansa.

Buwan ng Abril hanggang Hunyo ang flowering season habang Agosto hanggang Disyembre naman ang pag-aani ng bunga ng lanzones.

Napakaraming taglay na health benefits sa ating katawan ang lanzones.

Ilan dito ay may mataas na natural anti-oxidant content na tumutulong para maiwasan ang pagkakaroon ng sakit na cancer, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Polyphenol, Dietary Fiber, Naicin, Riboflavin, mainam ito para magkaroon ng magandang paningin, balat at ngipin.

Nagtataglay ng fructose at glucose ang lanzones na isang natural na vitamins at minerals na kailangan ng ating katawan.

Magandang itanim ang lanzones sa pamamagitan ng buto o seeds nito, pero pwede rin naman sa pamamagitan ng marcoting o grafting.

Sa pagtatanim nito mula sa buto, kumuha lamang ng seeds mula sa hinog na bunga at ibaon ng bahagya sa lupa saka diligan tuwing umaga. Tutubo na ito makalipas ang 15 hanggang 20-araw.

Kung kayo ay may enough space, magandang itanim ang lanzones na direkta sa lupa. Kung wala naman, pwede rin sa malalaking paso at timba.

Gusto ng lanzones ang full sunlight o walong oras na naaarawan sa maghapon.

Madaling alagaan ang lanzones at hindi lapitin ng mga insekto ang prutas na ito.

Kapag tumubo na ang lanzones, hindi rin ito halos inaalagaan. Sa halip ay didiligan lang kapag malapit ng matuyo ang lupa na pinagtaniman.

Tiyakin lang na magandang kalidad na lupa ang pagtataniman, na ang kombinasyon ay 60 percent buhaghag na lupa, 20 percent ay vermi-compost o chicken manure at 20 ay carbonized rice hull o ipa ng palay or cocopeat.

Kumuha ang Magsasakang Reporter ng buto ng lanzones saka itinanim sa timba.

Ang sikreto ng pagkakaroon ng maganda at malusog na halaman at prutas tulad ng lanzones ay mula sa matabang lupa.

Kapag nasa 4-years na ang tanim na lanzones, lagyan ng panibagong pataba na vermicast para manatiling maganda, malusog at mataba.

Ang lansones ay maaaring mapabunga sa loob ng 4-6 na taon.

Tandaan lang po na laging i-apply ang TLC-Tender Love and Care sa pagtatanim ng mga halaman at prutas tulad ng lanzones.

Bukod sa lanzones ay maraming tanim ang Magsasakang Reporter na iba't ibang gulay at fruit trees. Pero patuloy pang nagtatanim dahil sa paniniwalang ang pagkakaroon ng seguridad sa pagkain ay dapat magsimula sa ating tahanan, "FOOD SECURITY STARTS AT HOME.

Milyun-milyon ngayon ang nagugutom, maraming kabataan ang dumaranas ng malnutrition, ang pagtatanim at pagkain ng gulay at prutas ang solusyon.

Nagawa ko po ito, magagawa rin po ninyo.

Nawa po ay nakapagshare ako ng kaalaman at impormasyon ngayong araw na ito tungkol sa pagtatanim at pagaalaga ng lanzones.

Panoorin po ninyo ang mga video tutorial ko sa aking Youtube Channel na ANG MAGSASAKANG REPORTER tungkol sa step by step na pagtatanim, pag-aalaga at sikreto ng pagkakaroon ng magandang tanim na halaman.

Para sa iba pang tips at sikreto sa pagtatanim ng iba't ibang uri ng halaman, maaari po kayong manood at makinig ng aking TV at Radio program na Masaganang Buhay tuwing Linggo, alas-7:00 hanggang alas-8:00 ng umaga sa OnePH Cignal TV, Channel 1 ng TV-5. Mapapakinggan din po sa Radyo Singko 92.3 News FM.

Maaari rin kayong manood at mag-subscribe sa aking Youtube Channel na ANG MAGSASAKANG REPORTER para sa iba pang kaalaman at impormasyon sa pagtatanim ng iba't ibang uri ng halaman sa pamamagitan ng organikong pamamaraan.

Regular ninyong mababasa ang aking kolum dito sa **Pilipino Star Ngayon (PSN)** ng Star Group of Publications.

Sa mga tanong at komento ay maaari ninyo akong i-text, huwag po tawag ah, sa 09178675197.

STAY SAFE, HAPPY FARMING, GOD BLESS US ALL

Tempo
NEWS IN A FLASH
THE NATION'S FASTEST GROWING NEWSPAPER

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4 VIETNAMESE HELD FOR ILLEGAL FISHING OFF PAG-ASA ISLAND

By MARTIN SADONGDONG

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) revealed yesterday that four Vietnamese fishermen have been apprehended by authorities after they were allegedly caught in the act of using sodium cyanide, a poisonous compound, in their fishing activities off Pag-asa (Thitu) Island.

The PCG said that the Vietnamese fishermen, whose identities were not made public, were arrested in the vicinity waters off Pag-asa Island in Kalayaan, Palawan last Sept. 18 by joint forces of the PCG Station Kalayaan, Philippine Navy (PN), and Philippine National Police-Maritime Group (PNP-MG).

The joint maritime law enforcement team also intercepted the fishing vessel used by the Vietnamese locally known as "sampan" which was equipped with a compressor. Sampan is a small boat commonly used in East Asia typically with an oar at the stern.

"The fishermen were informed that they violated Sections 91 (poaching in Philippine waters) and 92 (fishing through explosives, noxious or poisonous substance, or electricity) of Republic Act No. 10654 or the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998," the PCG said.

The fishermen were also subjected to a panoramix examination and authorities confirmed that one of them is a minor, "specifically around 16 to 18 years old," the PCG added.

As of Monday, the fishermen remained under the custody of the PCG District Palawan for further investigation.

Pagasa Island is the largest of the Philippine-administered islands in the Kalayaan Island Group or Spratly Islands. It is located about 230 nautical miles from Palawan. A small Filipino fishing community resides on the island.

The Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) deployed a military contingent stationed on the island to protect it and the residents from illegal fishers and other hostile forces.

Abante
UNA SA BALITA

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4 na Vietnamese nasabat sa dagat

DINAKIP ng pinagsanib na puwersa ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Station Kalayaan, Philippine Navy (PN), at Philippine National Police-Maritime Group (PNP-MG) ang apat na mangingisdang Vietnamese sa Pag-asa Island sa Kalayaan, Palawan.

Ito'y matapos silang mahuli habang ilegal na nangingisda gamit ang sodium cyanide.

Kinumpiska ang kanilang bangka at ibang gamit nang wala ring maipakitang dokumento ang mga ito.

Kakasuhan sila ng paglabag sa Section 91 at 92 ng Republic Act No. 10654 o ang 'Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998'. ang mga Vietnamese.

Nasa kustodiya sila ng PCG District Palawan para sa karagdagang imbestigasyon at tamang disposisyon,

Samantala, sinabi ng PCG na patuloy ang pagbabantay nila sa mag karagatan ng bansa sa gitna ng sunod-sunod na pagkakasabat sa mga pinupuslit na kontrabando sa bansa.

Malaya
Business Insight

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Corn dips; wheat declines

SINGAPORE- Chicago corn futures slid on Tuesday as traders took a breather after two straight sessions of gains, although the slower-than-expected pace of US harvest provided a floor under the market.

Wheat declined for a second consecutive session, after climbing to a three-month high last week on the back of heightened Russia-Ukraine tensions.

The most-active corn contract on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) lost 0.6 percent to $6.76-3/4 a bushel. Wheat lost 0.6 percent to $9.06-3/4 a bushel and soybeans gave up 0.1 percent to $13.72-1/4 a bushel.

The US corn harvest was 20 percent complete as of Sunday, the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) said in a weekly crop progress report on Monday, behind the average estimate in a Reuters analyst poll of 22 percent and the five-year average, also 22 percent.

The soybean harvest was farther ahead at 22 percent complete, surpassing the average analyst estimate of 20 percent but behind the five-year average of 25 percent.

Heightened tensions between Russia and Ukraine, the world's leading grain exporters, triggered worries over supplies.

Ukrainian forces have broken through Russia's defenses in the south of the country while expanding their rapid offensive in the east, seizing back more territory in areas annexed by Moscow and threatening supply lines for Russian troops.

The escalation in Black Sea war came as the USDA said the 2022 US wheat harvest was smaller than previously forecast and cut its crop assessment below analysts' expectations to 1.650 billion bushels.

In a separate quarterly stocks report, the USDA on Friday reported US corn inventories were below analysts' expectations and soybean inventories topped estimates. The larger-than-expected soybean stocks added pressure to a soy market already under pressure from competition from South American supplies.

Commodity funds were net buyers of CBOT corn, soybean, soyoil and soymeal futures contracts on Monday and net sellers of wheat futures, traders said. - ***Reuters***

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Sugar sinks on growing supply; traders weigh Brazil election

NEW YORK/LONDON — Raw sugar futures on International Exchange (ICE) hit two-month lows on Monday on growing supply availability and as traders evaluate the results of elections in top sugar producer Brazil.

SUGAR: March raw sugar contract settled down 0.26 cent, or 1.5%, at 17.42 cents per pound (lb), having hit its lowest since early August at $17.36/lb.

Brazil's real currency and stock market surged after far-right President Jair Bolsonaro outperformed polling and clinched his place in a runoff vote set for Oct. 30, denying leftist Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva an outright victory in the first round.

A Bolsonaro victory is seen as mildly bearish for sugar as he is expected to keep fuel prices low — a move that would push cane mills to ramp up sugar output at the expense of cane-based biofuel ethanol.

Traders also cited selling from Indian mills that might be hedging sugar prices before the positive outlook for the country's new crop adds pressure to futures.

Elsewhere, trader Czarnikow forecast a global sugar surplus of 3.6 million tons in the 2022/23 season as it cut its estimate for Chinese consumption due to COVID-19 lockdowns.

ICE exchange said October deliveries were at 14,652 lots.

December white sugar fell $4.50, or 0.9%, at $524.20 a ton.

COFFEE: December arabica coffee fell 5.8 cents, or 2.6%, at $2.1575 per lb, having touched its lowest since early August at $2.1475/lb.

Rains in Brazil continue to improve moisture in coffee areas, boosting prospects for the 2023 crop.

Rabobank said the return of timely rains in the country could lead to lower prices, especially if it persists in November.

November robusta coffee rose $20, or 0.9%, at $2,173 a ton.

COCOA: December London cocoa settled down£25, or 1.3%, at £1,915 per ton. The sterling-priced contract reached a 1-1/2-year peak of £1,972 on Thursday, helped by weakness in the British currency.

Forecasters Climate42 said near-normal weather conditions are expected over the West African cocoa regions in November and while uncertainties dominate for December, it has a "slightly optimistic" outlook for January through to March.

December New York cocoa fell $17, or 0.7%, to $2,337 a ton.

— ***Reuters***

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UN pushes for cut in global fertilizer prices to avoid 'future crisis'

GENEVA — The United Nations is pushing to cut the price of fertilizers to avoid a "future crisis" of availability, said a senior U.N. trade official who is involved in talks aimed at boosting the export of Russian fertilizers, including ammonia.

Russia's has fueled a global food crisis and soaring fertilizer prices, according to the United Nations. Russia and Ukraine are key global exporters of grain, while Russia is also one of the largest exporters of fertilizers.

"If we are not able to bring fertilizer prices down, the crisis of affordability that we have today will be a crisis of availability tomorrow, and that is what we are working on right now," said Rebeca Grynspan, secretary-general of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

"To avert a future crisis, we need to bring fertilizer prices down," she told reporters in Geneva.

Russia is one of the world's largest suppliers of potash, phosphate and nitrogen fertilizers — key crop and soil nutrients — producing 13% of the global total. Fertilizer exports from Russia in the first half of 2022.

Facilitating Russia's food and fertilizer exports is a central aspect of a package deal brokered by the U.N. and Turkey on July 22 that also restarted Ukraine's Black Sea grain and fertilizer shipments. Russia has criticized the deal, complaining that its exports were still hindered.

JONATHAN ANSEL MOY DE VITRY-UNSPLASH

The deal included ammonia — a key ingredient in nitrate fertilizer. A from Russia's Volga region to Ukraine's Black Sea port of Pivdennyi (Yuzhny) was shut down when Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24.

The U.N. is now trying to broker a resumption of those ammonia exports.

But since talks started, Russia has moved to annex Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions after holding what it called referendums — votes that were denounced by Kyiv and Western governments as illegal and coercive.

Ms. Grynspan declined to comment on the ammonia negotiations, describing the situation to Reuters as "too sensitive." She added that U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had tried to call her while she was in the news conference.

"We need to get it right and bring prices down," she said. — ***Reuters***