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PBBM, DTI chief launch 'Kadiwa' caravan, distribute aid to MSMEs

TO bring affordable food products closer to the Filipino people and provide them with livelihood means, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., together with Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Alfredo Pascual, led the opening of the "Kadiwang Pangulo" caravan and distribution of financial assistance to small-scale enterprises in Pampanga on Monday.

During the event, the Chief Executive also witnessed the signing of the memorandum of agreement among different government agencies, such as the DTI, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Agriculture, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Social Welfare and Development, Presidential Communications Office, and Presidential Management Staff for the massive rollout of the Kadiwang Pangulo to other local government units in the country.

This initiative is aimed at giving the consumers access to cheap yet quality basic commodities. Also, it is crucial to

attain food security in the Philippines.

On the other hand, the fund distribution is intended to support businesses affected by the Covid-19 crisis, calamities, and other catastrophes to start anew post-pandemic.

A total of P6.541 million in monetary assistance was handed by the DTI to small enterprises during the ceremonial distribution held at the Benigno Aquino Hall in San Fernando.

From this amount, 16 beneficiaries of the Pangkabuyan sa Pagbangon at Ginawa Program in the capital city of Pampanga received P11,900 each, or a sum of P190,400.

For the RISE UP Micro Multi-Purpose Loan Program, all the seven recipients got an aggregate monetary assistance of P6.351 million.

Prior to these activities, Kadiwa caravans were launched in other parts of the country to show the government's bold effort to ensure the availability of affordable products to every Filipino.

Roderick L. Abad

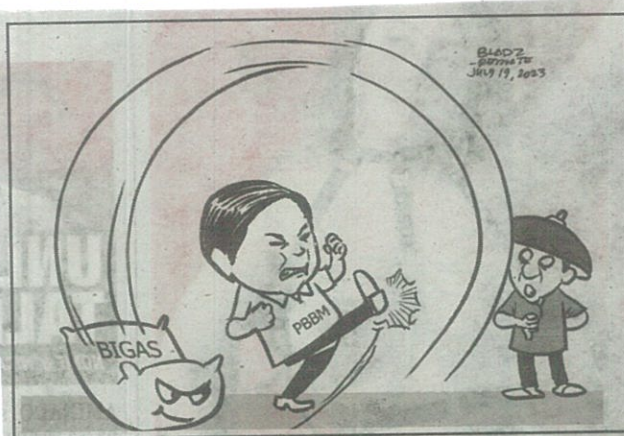
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EDITORIAL

MURANG BIGAS, MAY PAG-ASA BA?

NOONG panahon ng kampanya para sa presidential election, ipinangako nang noo'y presidential candidate na si Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na ibababa niya ang presyo ng bigas sa halagang P20-P25 bawat kilo.

Nanalo si Presidente Bongbong Marcos sa halalan kaya naman umaasa ang mahihirap na kababayan natin na sumuporta sa kanya na magkakatatotoo ang kanyang pangako kaugnay sa bigas.

Pero bakit sa halip na bumaba ang presyo ng bigas ay patuloy ito sa pagtaas kung saan umabot sa P2-P5 bawat kilo ang itinaas nito.

Idinadahilan ng pamahalaan at lalo na ang mga negosyante ang mababang buffer stock, mataas na presyo ng palay, ang tagtuyot, pagtaas ng presyo ng imported na bigas at ang pagtaas din ng presyo ng gasolina dahil sa labanan ng Russia at Ukraine at ilang serbisyo pa.

Base sa retail price, ang special rice ay P48 hanggang P60 kada kilo at P42-P49 naman ang premium rice, ang well milled rice ay P39-P46 kada kilo at P34-P40 bawat kilo ang regular milled rice.

Doble-kayod ang kailangang gawin ng pangkaraniwang manggagawa na nakakuha ng umento mula sa kanilang araw-araw na sahod. Pero P40 lang na dagdag ang nakuha ng mga nasa NCR kaya iyon ang pagkakasyahin nila sa kanilang budget gayong lahat ng presyo ng bilihin ay tumaas kabilang na ang noodles, delata, gulay, prutas at farm products.

Magkagayunman, gumagawa ng paraan ang pamahalaan upang mapababa ang presyo ng mga bilihin kung kaya't patuloy na nagbubukas ng mga Kadiwa Store sa iba't ibang panig ng bansa.

Karamihan ng mga paninda rito ay mula sa ani ng mga magsasaka tulad ng prutas at gulay kasama ang huling mga isda ng mga pumapalaot sa dagat kaya naibibigay ng mura pero lumalabas na maayos na kita naman sa mga mangingisda at magsasaka.

Maliban sa Kadiwa Stores, gumagawa rin ng paraan ang administrasyon ni Pangulong Marcos kung paano pa rin maibebenta ng mura ng mga negosyante ang kanilang bigas at iba pang produkto.

Ayon nga sa isang may-ari ng farm products company, naki-kipagtalastasan ang pamunuan ng Pangulo upang maibaba ang presyo ng bigas nang sa gayon ay unti-unting maisakatuparan ang pangako nitong murang bigas para sa lahat.

Abante TONITE

MABILIS SA BALITA

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PBBM nagbukas pa ng mga Kadiwa store

Sabay-sabay na binuksan nitong Martes ang mga Kadiwa ng Pangulo sa iba't ibang panig ng bansa para mas maraming mamamayan ang makinabang sa murang mga bilihan.

Pinangunahan ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang engrandeng paglulunsad ng Kadiwa ng Pangulo program sa kapitolyo ng Pampanga sa San Fernando City.

Kalahok sa aktibidad ang 81 lalawigan at 16 na local government unit sa National Capital Region (NCR).

Sa kanyang talumpati, sinabi ng Pangulo na sinimulan ang mga Kadiwa

center sa NCR hanggang sa dumami ito sa bawat lungsod at bayan, at marami ang humiling na sana ay magkaroon din nito sa kanilang lugar.

Sa halip aniya na isa-isahin ay magbubukas na sa buong bansa upang makarating sa publiko ang mas murang bilihan.

Ang mga Kadiwa ng Pangulo center ay bukas kada a-kinse at a-trenta ng buwan kung saan maibebenta ng mga magsasaka ang kanilang produkto sa mababang presyo tulad ng bigas, isda, poultry products, gulay, prutas at iba pang mga bilihan. (Alleen Taliping)



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House bill proposes palm oil dev't agency

A BILL filed in the House of Representatives is proposing to establish the Palm Oil Development Authority, overseen by the Office of the President, to gear up the industry for possible exports.

House Bill No. 8326 seeks to take advantage of the Philippines' "wide potential area for the production of palm oil. The industry has in place production technology and best practices that can be adopted by the small holders/growers and new investors," according to the bill's explanatory note.

The bill was filed by North Cotabato Rep. Joselito S. Sacdalan.

The proposed agency will be organized as a government-owned and -controlled corporation with an annual budget of P100 million.

The bill proposes a governing board headed by the Secretary

of Agriculture and Trade and Industry.

The Philippine Palm Oil Development Council, Inc. and the Department of Trade and Industry's Caraga Regional Office currently oversee the palm oil industry.

Mr. Sacdalan said the industry would prefer a more specialized and focused regulator.

"It is the desire of stakeholders, planters and farmers that the industry be fully developed/supported, as its economic potential/contribution to the country's gross domestic product is high," he said.

The Philippine Coconut Authority and several business groups in March launched an investigation over the alleged smuggling of palm oil. Albay Rep. Jose Ma. Clemente S. Salceda said smuggled palm oil led to P45 billion worth of foregone government revenue. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**



DA exec pushes closer cooperation in management of water resources

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) sought for closer cooperation among Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) member-countries in the implementation of effective measures to improve water resources management.

During the FAO Conference in Rome recently, DA Undersecretary Mercedita Sombilla emphasized the critical importance of implementing water-related measures efficiently and harmoniously at the national level.

She highlighted the significant step taken by the Philippines through the creation of the Water Resources Management Office (WRMO) via Executive Order (EO) 22, signed by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. in April.

The WRMO will act as a regulatory body to protect water resources, ensure their efficient use, and guarantee their availability for all economic sectors.

"This timely move by the government is crucial in securing the country's water resources for future generations," Sombilla said.

The DA official also highlighted the proactive steps being undertaken by the country to ensure preparedness for the potential worsening impacts of El Niño.

"One of these strategies involves cloud seeding operations to improve water irrigation and other water-impounding facilities, rivers and creeks and groundwater deposits, especially in production areas, critical watersheds and reservoirs," Sombilla added.

"Long-term mitigating measures are also in place to respond to water issues in the country. These solutions involve upgrading

irrigation facilities and dams to optimize water delivery and minimize wastage, constructing flood control and sea wall structures in flood-prone areas, and establishing newly water-impounding facilities in highland areas to capture rainfall," she said.

These measures are decisive responses to the intensifying impact of climate change, Sombilla added.

"The Philippines is also now investing in climate-resilient water infrastructures, such as solar-powered irrigation systems, promoting domestic water and recycling schemes at the household and community level to promote water conservation and advocating nature-based solutions like reforestation and expansion of mangrove areas, use of organic/bio-fertilizer as well as the adoption of water saving and climate resilient agriculture practices and technologies, such as the adjustment of planting calendars, use of alternate wetting and drying, better crop nutrient management," she added.

Furthermore, Sombilla underscored the importance of strengthening the capacity of nations through bilateral cooperation with member countries and tapping the expertise of the private sector to achieve efficient and effective water resource management and infrastructure.

"By working together and supporting each other to achieve the needed integrated management and efficient use of our water resources, under the able guidance and leadership of the Food and Agriculture Organization, is a major step towards our achieving the shared objective of a resilient agrifood system," the DA official said. **Raadee S. Sausa**

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200K rice farmers set to receive cash aid

THE Land Bank of the Philippines has distributed intervention monitoring cards (IMCs) to a total of 235,145 beneficiaries nationwide as of end-June this year.

The IMC is to be used by beneficiaries in getting their P5,000 cash assistance under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund-Rice Farmers Financial Assistance (RCEF-RFFA) program.

Landbank said the rest of 110,600 IMCs will be distributed until the end of August.

"Together with the DA (Department of Agriculture), we

will continue to ramp up the distribution of cash cards to help increase agricultural production and income," said Lynette Ortiz, Landbank president and chief executive officer, in a statement.

The RCEF-RFFA Program offers financial support to smallholder rice farmers registered under the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture and who are cultivating rice lands measuring two hectares and below.

Landbank is the disbursing arm of the program as part of the implementation of the Rice Tariffication Law. - *Jed Macapagal*



Pangasinan farmers brace for El Niño

LINGAYEN, Pangasinan: This rice-producing province has put in place measures to mitigate the possible effects to agriculture of the El Niño phenomenon, which is expected to hit the country starting in October this year.

Provincial agriculturist Dalisay Moya said that her office has identified vulnerable areas in the province and came up with recommendations to farmers.

According to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa), the El Niño is a climate pattern that warms the ocean surface in the central and eastern Pacific Ocean, causing below-normal rainfall conditions.

"The vulnerable areas in the

province are the rain-fed areas. We still have a very wide rain-fed area," Moya told Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) members during their regular session at the provincial capitol here on Monday.

Pangasinan has about 184,000 hectares of rice fields, making it the top rice producer in Ilocos Region and the country's third biggest rice producer.

Moya said that out of the 184,000 hectares rice area, about 71,321 hectares are still rain-fed and most are located in the western part.

"Farmers in fully irrigated areas are advised to plant again after the harvest to take advantage of the still high level of irrigation water in the dams, water impounding areas and water level underground,"

Moya said.

The San Roque Dam in San Manuel town in the eastern part of Pangasinan is one of the sources of irrigation water. The dam's water level significantly rose in the past few days due to the rains, according to an official of the San Roque Power Corp.

Moya said that rice fields at the tail end of irrigation systems should plant mung beans, vegetables, corn, and crops that do not demand much moisture to grow.

"In partially irrigated areas, farmers will be advised to plant alternative crops. They should have crop diversification," Moya said.

She said that those without any source of irrigation water will be advised not to plant and allow the

soil to fallow, to restore its fertility.

"In 2016, Pangasinan was hit by El Niño. But because of the adoption of new and appropriate technology, our rice sufficiency level in Pangasinan in 2016 was 200.54 percent. It means that even with the El Niño we had a high production level," Moya said.

She said that her office will also help farmers by distributing seeds that they can plant during the El Niño period.

Jose Estrada, chief meteorologist of Pagasa Dagupan, said that the dry spell is now being felt in Isabela.

He said that his office has been doing a massive education information campaign so the people can understand the El Niño phenomenon.

GABRIEL CARDINOZA

editorial

Can PHL eliminate hunger by 2030?

FIVE United Nations specialized agencies recently warned that the Sustainable Development Goal of ending hunger by 2030 will not be reached if current trends in food security and nutrition are not reversed immediately. The agencies, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development, issued the warning in a recently published report, titled "The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2023." One of the alarming findings is that over 122 million more people are facing hunger in the world since 2019 due to the pandemic and repeated weather shocks and conflicts, including the war in Ukraine. (See, "Report: Over 122M more people facing hunger due to Covid-19, weather shocks," in the **BUSINESSMIRROR**, July 17, 2023).

The 2023 edition of the report indicated that between 691 million and 782 million people faced hunger in 2022. The UN report also found that approximately 29.6 percent of the global population, equivalent to 2.4 billion people, did not have access to food, as measured by the prevalence of moderate or severe food insecurity. Of this figure, around 900 million individuals faced severe food insecurity.

According to FAO, people are food insecure when they lack regular access to enough safe and nutritious food for normal growth and development and an active and healthy life. This may be due to unavailability of food and/or lack of resources to obtain food.

The Philippines is one of the countries where citizens continue to struggle to gain access to safe and nutritious food. The 2023 UN report indicated that the prevalence of moderate and severe food insecurity in the country averaged 44.7 percent from 2020 to 2022. This means that nearly half of the population experienced food insecurity during those years.

The Covid-19 pandemic exposed the food supply vulnerabilities of the Philippines, which heavily relies on imports to fill its domestic food requirements. The spike in logistics cost and Russia's attack on Ukraine made it tough for policymakers to stabilize the prices of goods, including basic food items. Weather shocks, such as Typhoon Odette, contributed to the spikes in the prices of certain food items like sugar and some processed food.

Russia's recent decision to halt a deal that allowed grain to flow from Ukraine to other countries is the latest shock that would make it more challenging for the Philippines, a food importer, to improve its citizens' access to food. On July 17, Russia said it will return to the wartime deal brokered by the UN and Turkey last year after its demands are met. (See, "Russia halts wartime deal that allows Ukraine to ship grain in a hit to global food security," in the **BUSINESSMIRROR**, July 17, 2023). This development poses a major setback for policymakers around the world, particularly those in import-dependent nations, where hunger persists.

In the Philippines, millions continue to experience hunger, based on a survey conducted by the Social Weather Stations. Around 3 million Filipino families experienced involuntary hunger at least once from October to December 2022, at a time when consumption is at its highest due to the Christmas holidays. It is our hope that the Philippines succeeds in eliminating hunger by 2030, in line with the country's commitment as a signatory to the UN Social Agenda

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Wheat, soybeans gain

SINGAPORE- Chicago wheat futures inched higher on Tuesday, recouping some losses from the previous session, as supply concerns rose after Russia suspended its participation from a Black Sea pact that allowed Ukraine to ship grains.

Soybeans rose, although gains were limited by a better-than-expected condition of the US crop, while corn edged higher.

Global grain prices will continue to be volatile until the market is able to decipher the impact of Russia withdrawing from the Black Sea grain initiative, according to

Rabobank senior grains analyst Dennis Voznesenski.

Ukraine has been building alternative avenues for exports since the start of the war, he said. "However, they are not yet sufficient enough to entirely compensate for the loss of the Black Sea grain initiative."

The deal allowing the safe Black Sea export of Ukraine's grain for the past year expired after Russia quit and warned it could not guarantee the safety of ships in a move the United Nations said would "strike a blow to people in need everywhere."