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DA targets 1M ha for Masagana rice program

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) is targeting 1 million hectares (ha) of irrigated areas for planting through the Masagana Rice Industry Development Program (MIRDP).

DA Undersecretary for Rice Industry Development Leocadio Sebastian said that by planting irrigated areas in both national and communal systems of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), it could lead to a yield of 8 tons per hectare or 8 million metric tons for harvest early next year despite the El Niño phenomenon.

"If we are able to do this, we don't need to worry about our rice supply next year," Sebastian said in a statement on

Thursday.

"And if sustained, we can reach our President's (Ferdinand Marcos Jr.) self-sufficiency goal of 97.5 percent," he added.

But in order to achieve the goal, Sebastian noted this would entail the involvement and cooperation of concerned agencies — the DA, the NIA, Bureau of Soils, the Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice), Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization, the Cooperatives Development Authority, the National Food Authority, the Department of Agrarian Reform, the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Agriculture Credit Policy

Council, the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp., Development Bank of the Philippines and Land Bank of the Philippines.

He also emphasized the importance of getting the participation of the private sector and giving advice to farmers on how they could avail of government interventions and technologies which they could use to maximize their production.

"We need to mainstream the transformation efforts into policies, programs and investment plans," said Sebastian.

The DA official also noted the importance of information on how farmers could best earn from their produce through market linkages.

Meanwhile, DA regional directors highlighted the operations in their jurisdictions in terms of risks and constraints, and their expected planting outcomes. Among them is the 15-percent self-sufficiency in rice from Mimaropa (Region 4B) with its excess production benefiting Calabarzon (Region 4A).

PhilRice presented the El Niño risk maps for validation by the regional executive directors of the DA and the different attached agencies and rice industry stakeholders.

The NIA, for their part, suggested synchronous planting to prevent the outbreak of pests and diseases.

JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL

Egay leaves 13 dead, P58 million in crop damage

TYPHOON "Egay" has left the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) leaving a death toll of 13 people and P58 million in crop damage in its wake, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reported on Friday.

The agency said six of the fatalities have been confirmed, while the other seven are being validated.

Five of the deaths were in the Cordillera Administrative Region, and one in Western Visayas.

The NDRRMC said 140,923 families, or 502,782 persons, in five regions were affected by the typhoon.

Agricultural damage was at least P58 million, with more than 3,000 farmers and fisherfolk affected.

► **DamageA2**

Egay leaves 13 dead, P58 million in crop damage

Corn and rice fields in the Cordillera Administrative Region, Ilocos Region, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) and Caraga suffered the biggest damage.

Damage to infrastructure was estimated at around P656 million.

A total of 2,002 houses were also damaged.

Nearly P38.8 million worth of food and nonfood items have been distributed to typhoon-stricken residents.

In its own report Friday, the Department of Agriculture (DA) placed total crop loss at 19,488 metric tons (MT), affecting 58,104 hectares of farmland.

Affected commodities include rice, corn, high-value crops, and livestock and poultry.

Corn absorbed the biggest loss — 14,990 MT worth P358.4 million.

Rice loss was 4,489 MT worth P152.5 million; damage to livestock and poultry and high-value crops reached P1.6 million and P366,000, respectively.

On Thursday, DA Assistant Secretary for Operations Arnel

de Mesa said P1 billion from the department's quick response fund can be tapped to provide assistance to affected farmers.

De Mesa said the DA will also distribute seedlings and fertilizer discount vouchers to affected farmers, drugs to livestock and poultry growers, and fingerlings to fishermen.

A farming group said it expects the prices of agricultural items to rise due to the damage brought by Egay.

"Retail prices of rice, vegetables, poultry and fish, and other food produce are expected to increase anew after Super Typhoon Egay pummeled farmlands and coastal areas, particularly in the Central and Northern Luzon regions," the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) said in a statement on Friday.

The group urged the government to impose a price freeze in calamity-stricken areas.

Despite exiting the PAR, Egay will continue to interact with the southwest monsoon or "habagat" to bring rain to a big section of the country.

Weather specialist Daniel James Villamil of the Philippine

Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said the former super typhoon was tracked at 675 kilometers north-northwest of Itbayan, Batanes.

"The typhoon is already away from the Philippine landmass, but it continues to enhance the southwest monsoon that brings rain in most parts of the country," Villamil said.

Heavy rainfall of up to 100 millimeters is forecast for Saturday in Zambales, Bataan, Mindoro and the northern portion of Palawan, including Cuyo, Calamian and Kalayaan Islands.

"Under these conditions, flooding and rain-induced landslides are expected, especially in areas that are highly or very highly susceptible to these hazards," Villamil said.

Except for Mindanao, which will have overcast skies with scattered showers and thunderstorms, most parts of the country will be affected by the monsoon, Pagasa said.

As another tropical depression approaches, the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) has ordered all its port management offices to make the necessary preparations.

The new weather system will be named "Falcon" once it enters PAR.

PPA General Manager Jay Santiago said the agency's preemptive measures helped minimize the impact of Egay in all ports along its path.

"Minimal damage was reported in ports, including one broken glass panel door in PMO Northern Luzon due to strong winds, but, other than that, all the PMOs have followed the standard operating procedures during typhoon season," Santiago said.

Santiago visited the NorthPort Passenger Terminal in Manila's North Harbor after the last of the stranded passengers had boarded.

National Capital Region North Port Manager Aurora Mendoza said the shower area and comfort rooms will be further improved, and hot meals are always on standby for stranded passengers.

Aside from the free phone charging station, the PPA also offers free water refilling stations.

The PPA also provides free film showings featuring Filipino movies to stranded passengers.

**FRANCO JOSE C. BAROÑA,
JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL
AND ARLIE O. CALALO**



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REGIONS

SRA warning: Stick to milling schedule

BACOLOD CITY—The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) is sticking to its decision to start the milling season on Sept. 1 to ensure higher sugar yield and revenues for farmers. Acting SRA Administrator Paul Azcona warned of sanctions on those that would violate the SRA order. "I'm pleading to the mills to respect the Sept. 1 date," said Azcona, stressing that defiance "will not be tolerated." —STORY BY CARLA P. GOMEZ

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IT'S FINAL: MILL REOPENING ON SEPT. 1

SRA TO SANCTION PLANTERS DEFYING SUGAR MILLING SCHEDULE

By **Carla P. Gomez**
@carlagomezINQ

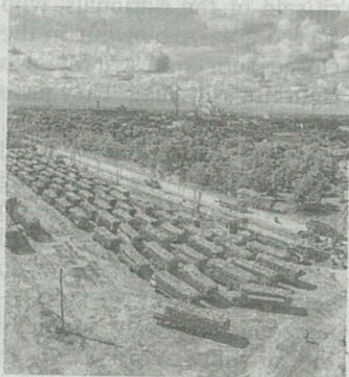
BACOLOD CITY—The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) is sticking to its decision to start the milling season on Sept. 1 to ensure higher sugar yield and revenues for the farmers.

Acting SRA Administrator Paul Azcona warned that sanctions would be imposed to those that would violate the SRA order.

"I'm pleading to the mills to respect the Sept. 1 date. Sanctions will be imposed on those that defy the SRA advisory. It will not be tolerated," said Azcona at a press conference at the SRA office in Bacolod on Thursday.

So far, he said, only one sugar mill had requested to start the milling in August but based on SRA computations, the milling that was allowed to start in August last year caused lower yield and losses of about P700 million to small farmers.

"The main thrust of the



READY FOR THE GRIND
Trucks loaded with sugarcane line up to deliver cane for milling at Victorias Milling Company in Victorias City, Negros Occidental, in this photo taken early this year. —PHOTO COURTESY OF **RONNIE BALDONADO**

current administration is to improve production capacity because we are so import dependent and we want to move away from that. We want to be self-sufficient," he added.

Azcona was responding to a letter from the Sugar Council, composed of the Confederation of Sugar Producers' Associations Inc., National Federation of Sugarcane Planters Inc. and Panay Federation of Sugarcane Farmers Inc., asking the SRA to allow the start of the milling season in August.

Surprised

Azcona said he first learned about the letter through the media and was surprised by it since sugar planters knew as early as May and had agreed to begin the milling season on Sept. 1.

He said the sugar federations should instead back their requests with figures, noting that of the nine sugar mills in Negros, only one protested the reopening of sugar milling to Sept. 1.

Azcona said the Sept. 1 mill reopening was the first in a series of deferment of dates in the next three years to go back to the original mill opening,

which was Oct. 1.

"By 2025, we will be back on track with the hope that our annual production will increase," he added.

Azcona said they conducted a simulation of the August and September production last year wherein the August figures showed that 432,000 tons of canes were milled with an average LKG/TC (50 kg-bag/ton cane) of 1.4 at an average price then of P2,800 per LKG bag of sugar or a total of P1.8 billion in revenues.

The same volume of canes milled a month later, yielded an average LKG/TC of almost 1.7 at an average price then of P3,300 per LKG bag of sugar or a total of P2.5 billion, he said.

"It's a big difference of about P700 million which could have been additional income for our farmers, especially since most, if not all, of those who milled in August of last year were our small farmer beneficiaries," Azcona said. INQ

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'Egay' damage to farms balloons to P512.9M

By Jordeene B. Lagare
@jordeenelagare

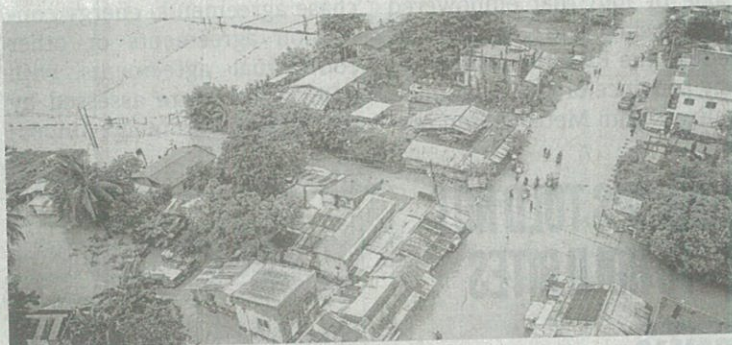
Agriculture damage wrought by Typhoon "Egay" (international name: "Doksuri") has ballooned to P512.9 million as of Friday, from only P62 million previously reported even as the typhoon already exited the Philippine area of responsibility, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said.

In its latest bulletin, the DA said Egay affected 51,926 farmers from the earlier reported 3,679.

The DA estimated the volume of production loss at 19,488 metric tons (MT) spanning 58,104 hectares of agricultural areas.

"The increase is due to the updated reports from Ilocos Region and Mimaropa, and additional reports from Cagayan Valley and Western Visayas," the agency said.

The affected commodities include rice, corn, high-value crops, livestock and poultry. The agency is expected to record additional losses in the sector due to the typhoon as it assessed reports on the ground.



INUNDATED Farms planted to rice in Oriental Mindoro were not spared from the floods spawned by heavy rain brought by Typhoon "Egay." —PHOTO FROM MDRMO BULALACAO FACEBOOK PAGE

Corn took the biggest hit with P358.4 million, accounting for more than half of the total losses. The volume loss is pegged at 14,990 MT covering 39,825 hectares.

Rice came second with P152.5 million. Livestock and poultry as well as high-value crops sustained damage worth P1.6 million and P366,000, respectively.

The sectors hit due to the typhoon, which ravaged certain parts of the country, in the last few days, was higher than the

P53.1 million recorded on Thursday wherein 2,303 farmers and fishers were affected at that time.

Likewise, the amount was higher than P50.84 million worth of damage caused by Tropical Depression "Amang" in April.

Losses from Egay lower

Egay's impact on the industry, however, was lower than the P1.3 billion in losses brought about by the combination of low pressure area, Intertropical Convergence Zone, shear line

and northeast monsoon (amihan) that hit the farm sector early this year.

In Metro Manila, locally produced rice is priced at P37 to P60 per kilogram as of Friday, slightly lower than P38 to P50 per kg in the same period a year ago, according to the DA's price monitoring.

Imported rice is being sold at P42 to P58 per kg compared with P38 to P59 per kg last year. Imported regular milled rice is unavailable.

Tilapia prices ranged from P105 to P160 per kg from last year's P120 per kg while milkfish (*bangus*) is sold at P140 to P240 per kg from P160 per kg.

A kilo of local round scad is retailed from P220 to P260 compared to P240 the previous year.

Imported round scad, available only in Guadalupe Market, is sold for P200 per kg.

The DA earlier said the Department of Budget and Management added P1 billion to the quick response fund to provide support to affected farmers and fisherfolk. **INQ**



Rice prices may spike after India bans rice export

By BELLA CARIASO

An agriculture expert warned that the retail prices of rice will further go up after the decision of India to impose a rice export ban.

In an interview with *One News' "The Chiefs,"* former agriculture undersecretary Fermin Adriano noted that while the ban will not affect the supply as India only supplies minimal rice to the Philippines, it may trigger a spike in global rice prices because of speculation.

"Businessmen are now speculating because of the

Indian action. Certainly the speculators or producers in other countries thinking of higher profit will jack up their prices, but they have given us the assurance they are not resorting to a rice export ban, which is good for us," Adriano said.

Adriano noted that Vietnam, which supplies more than 90 percent of the Philippines' rice imports, already increased its price of the staple to \$600 per metric ton compared to the previous \$500 per MT.

"If Vietnam raises its

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Rice prices

From Page 1

prices, I just saw that they are raising it now, that will really hurt us, it will lead to an increase in the prices," Adriano said.

India has said it was imposing an export ban on non-basmati white rice after retail rice prices climbed three percent in a month after monsoon rains caused significant damage to crops.

Adriano noted that as of June 2023, the country already imported at least 1.8 million MT of rice.

According to him, based on the data from the Department of Agriculture (DA), there was a good harvest for the first six months of the year.

"Hopefully we will have another round of good harvest, again it is unpredictable because of the weather that we are experiencing right now. A lot of the rice and corn in the north, particularly in Cagayan, also in Occidental Mindoro have been hit by Typhoon Egay, which is a real problem," he said.

Based on the monitoring of the DA, the retail prices of imported well-milled rice rose to as high as P48 per kilo; imported premium rice, P50 per kilo and imported special rice, P58 per kilo.

Retail prices of local rice ranged between P44 and P60 per kilo.

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More rains From Page 1

may intensify into a typhoon today.

The cyclone was monitored 1,365 km east of Eastern Visayas as of 3 p.m. yesterday and was moving westward at 15 kph and carrying maximum winds of 65 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 80 kph.

Even as the cyclone intensifies in the next few days, PAGASA said it is unlikely that tropical cyclone wind signals will be raised over any part of the country. Falcon will reach its peak intensity by late Monday or Tuesday.

PAGASA warned that Falcon may enhance the southwest monsoon that will trigger occasional or monsoon rains over the western portions of Luzon and the Visayas. The extent and timing of the monsoon enhancement and rainfall may still change depending on the movement of the cyclone.

The monsoon is still being enhanced by Typhoon Egay and will continue to bring significant amounts of rain in the next few days.

Around 50-100 mm of rain is forecast over Zambales, Bataan, Occidental Mindoro and the northern portions of Palawan, according to PAGASA.

Occasional rains are forecast over Pangasinan, Occidental Mindoro and Northern Palawan including Calamian and Cuyo Islands.

Meanwhile, cloudy skies with scattered rains are expected over Metro Manila, the Visayas, Cordillera Administrative Region, Calabarzon, the rest of Ilocos Region, the rest of Central Luzon and the rest of MIMAROPA, Batanes and Babuyan Islands.

The trough of the storm will also bring scattered rainshow-

ers over Mindanao while the rest of Luzon may see isolated rainshowers.

Agri damage

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has pegged the initial damage to the agriculture sector by Typhoon Egay at P512.9 million.

The agency said the damage and losses were reported in Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Ilocos Region, Regions 4 A and B, the Caraga Region, Cagayan Valley and Western Visayas.

Based on reports from its regional field offices (RFOs), the typhoon has affected at least 51,926 farmers and 58,104 hectares of agricultural areas, with volume of production loss at 19,488 metric tons (MT).

The corn sector registered the highest amount of damage at P358.4 million, with 39,825 hectares affected and 14,990 MT in volume losses. The rice sector incurred P152.5 million worth of damage with 18,264 hectares affected and 4,489 MT lost.

Meanwhile, the livestock and poultry sector lost 274 heads of chicken, swine, cattle, carabao and goat valued at P1.6 million.

The DA said it expects losses to increase in the areas affected by Egay as it conducts assessment in the agriculture and fishery sectors, in coordination with national government agencies, local government units and disaster risk reduction and management offices.

According to the DA, affected farmers can avail of at least P25,000 loan under the Survival and Recovery loan program of the Agricultural Credit Policy Council.

At least P1-billion Quick Response Fund is also avail-

More rains seen as Falcon approaches

By ROMINA CABRERA

Tropical Cyclone Falcon is forecast to enter the Philippine area of responsibility between tonight and tomorrow morning and may trigger monsoon rains starting today, according to state weather forecasters.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said that Falcon (international name Khanun)

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able for the rehabilitation of affected areas.

Meanwhile, the retail prices of vegetables started to go up amid the devastation brought by Egay to the agriculture sector.

Based on the latest monitoring of the DA, the retail prices of potatoes reached as high as P200 per kilo compared to P150 per kilo on July 26.

Other retail prices of vegetables include carrots (P260 per kilo) chili (P200) cabbage (P160), *pechay* Tagalog (P150), ginger (P140), string beans (P130), Baguio beans (P120), eggplant (P120), tomatoes (P120), calamansi (P100), chayote (P80) and squash (P60).

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesperson Kristine Evangelista assured the public of enough supply of vegetables despite the damage brought by Egay. Evangelista said the DA continues to monitor at least 13 wet markets in

Metro Manila to make sure that the price adjustments are reasonable.

Following the declaration of Ilocos Norte, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan of Ilocos Sur also approved a resolution declaring their province under a state of calamity due to Egay.

Ilocos Sur Gov. Jerry Singson said the Quirino Bridge in Bantay town was destroyed by floodwaters. He added that most of the affected residents were still in evacuation centers.

In Bataan, Balanga City and the municipalities of Orani, Hermosa, Samal, Abucay, Pilar and Dinalupihan were affected by flashfloods brought by intermittent moderate to heavy rains triggered by Egay on Thursday. - With Jun Elias, Ric Sapnu, Bella Cariaso, Cesar Ramirez, Danessa Rivera, Ramon Efren Lazaro, Richmond Mercurio, Emmanuel Tupas

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Pangamba ng mga pobreng magsasaka

MALAPIT sa puso ko ang mga magsasaka.

Mga pobreng magsasaka na kapag lumakas lang ang ulan sa kanilang probinsiya pagkatapos ng tag-araw, hindi na mapakali ang kanilang mga pamilya.

Tumitingala na lang sila sa langit at nagdarasal na huwag masira ang kanilang mga pananim, kung saan ang kanilang puhunan ay inutang lang nila. Makakabayad lang sila pagkatapos ng anihan kung may aanihin sila.

Kahit walang bagyo, kapag tuluy-tuloy ang ulan nai-stress ang mga pamilya ng mga magsasaka. Karamihan sa kanila, undiagnosed o sila mismo, hindi aware na mayroon silang matinding anxiety dahil sa sobrang takot at pangamba.

Nangungunsumisyon sa lahat ng mga elemento tulad ng panahon, mga pinagkakautangan nila, mga pananim nila at kung sino ang bibili ng kanilang aanihing produkto. Laging nasa isip nila, na kapag bumagyo at nasira ang kanilang pananim lalo silang malulubog sa utang.

Ito ang reyalidad ng buhay ng ating mga pobreng mag-



sasaka sa mga malalayong probinsiya.

Dahil salat sa kaalaman, pinagsasamantalahan at ginagantso pa ng mga middle man at mga trader. Na kadalasan, ang kasapakat pa ay yung mga opisyal nila sa kanilang barangay na dapat sila ang pumuprotekta sa kanila.

Mga magsasaka na ginagamit pangkolateral ang kanilang mga sakahan sa mga banko sa pangakong malaki ang kikitain kapag nagkasundo sila.

Marami nang mga literal na mga naghahampas ng lupa ang naloko ng mga trader na lumapit sa aming action center sa #ipABITAGmo.

Magkukunwaring bibilhin ang kanilang inaning produkto pero ang presyong inaalok, pamatay. Yung halos hindi na mabubuhay ang mga magsasaka na lubog na sa utang.

Bukod pa ito sa mga isinusumbong nilang mga bangko,

(Sundan sa pahina 5)

BEN TULFO... Mula pahina 4

mga ka-sosyo raw nila sa negosyo at mga trader na nanloko sa kanila. As in pinatikim lang sila ng konting pera tapos ang mga inisyu sa kanilang tseke, talbog na.

Ito lang kakaalis na bagyong Egay, matinding lungkot at pinsala ang iniwan sa tinatayang 2,303 magsasaka. Ayon sa Department of Agriculture, P53.1 milyon ang nasalantang mga lupaing sakahan sa Cordillera Administrative Region, Cala-

barzon, Mimaropa at Caraga. Tsk-tsk!

Entonses, ang limang pangunahing problema ng mga magsasaka natin sa Pinas ay ang kanilang kapital, postharvest facility, pabagu-bagong klima, market access o pagbebentahan at innovation o kaalaman sa makabagong teknolohiya.

Ito sana ang makita at mabigyan ng pansin ng ating pamahalaan. Ang kalagayan ng mga pobreng magsasaka.

P58M pananim wasak kay 'Egay'

PUMALO na sa higit P58 milyon ang naitalang pinsala ng bagyong Egay sa agrikultura.

Habang aabot naman sa P1,817,890 ang pinsala sa livestock, poultry, at fisheries.

Apektado ng bagyo ang nasa 3,364 mangi-ngisda at magsasaka.

Base pa sa ulat ng National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), umabot na sa mahigit P656 milyon ang pinsala ng bagyong Egay sa mga imprastraktura sa Ilocos, Mimaropa, Bicol, Western Visayas, Davao, Soccsksargen at Bangsamoro. (Natalia Antonio)



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REMATE

ANG DIARYO NG MASA



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MATAMLAY NA PANG-UNAWA SA KAHIRAPAN AT PRESYUHAN



NI ROBERT B. ROQUE, JR.

MAAARING nagawa ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr., na positibo ang kondisyon ng mga Pilipino sa kanyang State of the Nation Address o SONA nitong Lunes at tumanggap pa nga ng standing ovation, pero hindi maaaring palakpakan ang katotohanan.

Isang araw matapos niyang pahanngain ang mga manonood sa Batasan Pambansa, nabunyag sa pinakabagong Social Weather Stations survey, na isinagawa ng Hunyo 28 hanggang Hulyo 1, ang isang masakit na realidad: Aabot sa 45% o 12.5 milyong pamilyang Pilipino ang ikinokonsidera ang kanilang sarili bilang mahirap, kung saan 33% ang masasabing labis na naghihikahos.

Bagama't may bahagyang improvement simula noong Marso sa larangan ng self-rated poverty, nakababahala pa rin ang tinukoy na bilang.

Ang mga rehiyon ang napuruhan sa paghihirap na ito ng ating ekonomiya, bagaman ang mga itinuturing ang kanilang sarili na maralita ay nabawasan ng ilang puntos.

Nakalulungkot malaman na maging sa Metro Manila, kung saan nag-uuma-

paw ang sangkatutak na oportunidad, nasa 35% ng mga pamilya ang patuloy na nagdarahop.

At nakakadismaya rin ang bilang ng self-rated food poverty figures, kung saan 34% ng mga pamilya ang hirap nang maghanap ng kanilang kakainin.

Alin sa dalawa, pupwedeng uminom ang Presidente ng napaka-espesyal na 'Cool Aid' o nagsinungaling siya sa buong bansa sa walang pakundangan at walang alinlangan niyang pagsasabi na bumubuti na ang ekonomiya habang nananatiling mataas ang presyo ng mga bilihin, hindi lahat nauumentuhan, at marami ang walang trabaho.

At nagawa pa talaga niyang ianunsyo na bumaba na raw ang presyo ng pagkain, kabilang ang bigas, asukal, karne, isda, at mga gulay! Posible lamang ito sa aktuwal na mundo sa loob ng isang **Kadiwa rolling store**.

Pero paglabas ng mga palengke, ng talipapa ng komunidad, at grocery stores, kukumpirmahin ng mga presyo kung ano ang nakasaad sa consumer price index data: ang presyo ng pagkain, kung hindi man tumaas ay nananatili sa mataas na presyuhan nito sa nakalipas na mga buwan.

SHORT BURSTS. Para sa mga komento o reaksiyon, mag-email sa firingline@ymail.com o mag-tweet sa @Side_View.