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Marcos eyes gov't-to-gov't importation of rice - DA

By **BELLA CARIASO**

In an effort to boost the stocks of the National Food Authority (NFA), **President Marcos** will preside over an inter-agency meeting at Malacañang today to discuss the government-to-government importation of rice, an official of the Department of Agriculture (DA) said.

At a press conference, Agriculture Assistant Secretary and deputy spokesman Rex Estoperez said Marcos is authorized to approve government rice importation during emergencies under the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL) or Republic Act 11203.

"The President is worried as government stocks, the NFA (rice) stocks are not that high. It stands at 1.56 days to last or at least one million metric tons (MT) so that is a cause for worry for us," Estoperez said.

Marcos has said that he is considering the importation of rice from India.

Estoperez clarified that the 1.56 days remaining inventory of the NFA was based on the daily consumption of the staple food for the entire country.

"The NFA will only have 1.56 days left if it will feed the entire population. But since the stocks are used for relief efforts, the 1.5 million MT of NFA rice are enough to supply the needs of the DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development) in its relief efforts," he explained.

According to Estoperez, the country's daily rice consumption is pegged at 67,000 MT.

He said that Marcos has the authority to order the government-to-government importation of rice amid the devastation brought by Typhoon Egay in various areas in the country.

In Pampanga alone, the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist pegged the damage brought by Egay to rice farms at P155.7 million. It also continues to record more damage cost to high-value crops, corn and the fisheries sector.

"With the power of the President, the importation will not only boost the inventory of the NFA, it will also soften the prices (of rice). We've done this before. We cannot control the private sector in increasing the retail prices (rice) but the government will be there to stabilize the price," he pointed out.

Under the RTL, Estoperez said traders could import rice without any ceiling.

He said today's meeting with Marcos would determine if there is really a need to import the grains through government-to-government negotiation. "We have to finalize. The President has the authority to do that. The government has previously negotiated with India, Vietnam and even Pakistan. With this calamity, the price of (rice) also increased in the world market."

Marcos would also set the volume

of rice to be imported under the government-to-government deal during the meeting.

Estoperez said the NFA failed to meet its target of procuring palay from the farmers with its allowable maximum buying price of P19 per kilo as the private sector was buying at P21 to P22 per kilo.

"It failed to compete, that is why the recommendation of the administrator of NFA (Robert Bioco), through the (NFA) Council, and will be submitted to the President is to increase the procurement price of the NFA and implement various strategies," he added.

Meanwhile, Estoperez called on the public to limit the kilos of rice being bought to prevent unnecessary hoarding amid the expected spike in retail prices of the staple food.

"We should not buy (rice) too much as that will create another problem," he said.

Estoperez has said that the decision of India to ban rice export will further increase the retail prices of rice.

Based on latest monitoring of the DA in Metro Manila markets, the retail prices of local regular milled rice are pegged to as high as P44 per kilo; local well-milled rice, P49 per kilo; local special rice, P60 per kilo; imported well-milled rice, P48 per kilo; imported premium rice, P50 per kilo and imported special rice, P58 per kilo. — **With Ric Sapnu, Danessa Rivera**



Rice stocks good for only 2 days

BY JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said the rice buffer stock of the National Food Authority (NFA) was good for just two days.

DA Assistant Secretary and concurrent chief of staff Rex Estoperez said during a briefing on Monday that as of July 27, the buffer stock was 53,014.26 metric tons, enough for 1.56 days, based on the daily rice consumption rate (DCR) of 679,670 bags, or 33,983.5 MT.

Estoperez said the possibility of importing rice will be discussed with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., who is also the Agriculture secretary.

The President "will update the interagency tomorrow [on] what the volume [to be imported] is and where to get that," he said.

The NFA is required to maintain a buffer stock for nine days. It used to be 15 to 30

days, but the level was revised by the Rice Tariffication Law.

Federation of Free Farmers National President Raul Montemayor said the government's current rice stock is much lower than what it is supposed to maintain.

"Basic reason is they have been releasing the buffer stock for many purposes other than calamity assistance," Montemayor said.

The NFA is authorized to draw from the buffer stock as part of relief aid during emergencies and calamities.

But the agency also allocates rice to the government's Kadiwa stores, military personnel, prisoners, "and I understand

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Rice stocks good for only 2 days

even some legislators and LGUs (local government units) despite the fact that there have been no real calamities," said Montemayor.

He said the Rice Tariffication Law prohibits the NFA from im-

porting rice.

When the President said "that we might have to import, maybe he meant that the government will import maybe not through NFA but through another agency," he said.

Montemayor said a smaller buffer stock could affect the capacity of the government to respond to emergencies like the series of typhoons that have been buffeting the country.



Priority given to aggie sector elates local food producers

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. devoted a huge portion of his second State of the Nation Address (SONA) to matters directly related to the agriculture sector and local food producers found it reassuring.

Past presidents did not focus on the plethora of issues surrounding the key sector the way Marcos did in his 1 hour and 11-minutes-long speech, Danilo Fausto, president of the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food, Inc. (PACAFI), said.

"We are really happy because he (the president) managed to stress just how important the agriculture sector is to his administration. In the past we were not given so much attention," he said.

Fausto noted that PACAFI's membership is particularly encouraged that Marcos singled out smugglers, hoarders and price manipulators and vowed to have appropriate charges filed against them.

He pointed out that legitimate investors in food production are often the victims of smuggling, hoarding and price manipulation, which is why "we would like to see the government do more than just file charges. They should not stop until those behind them (illegal activities) are put behind bars."

Fausto cited as an example the supposedly rampant smuggling of agricultural goods, which often creates a supply glut, and competes in the local market to the detriment of domestic food growers.

PACAFI's membership includes such organizations as United Broiler Raisers Association (UBRA), Pork Producers Federation of the Philippines (Pro-Pork), Philippine Egg Board Association (Egg Board), as well commercial fishing industry stakeholders, among others.

Fausto said PACAFI also favors a review of the Philippine Fisheries Code (RA 8550) in hopes of redrawing the borders between small-scale fishing and commercial fishing grounds, a proposal to which Marcos has indicated some flexibility.

He explained that current government policy dictates that municipal waters extend up to 15 kilometers from shore, and is thus reserved for small-scale fishing activities, while in reality, small fishers "rarely venture beyond 5 kilometers from land."

Fausto said that PACAFI's members in the commercial fishing sector are appealing for the president's go-ahead to cast their nets in portions of municipal waters not often reached by small fishers.

For his part, Edwin Chen, past president of the Pork Producers Federation of the Philippines (Pro-Pork) and incumbent PACAFI director, also welcomed the enhanced focus on the agriculture sector, particularly on livestock growers.

During his SONA, the president mentioned that tighter bio-security measures would be implemented in response to a recent outbreak of livestock diseases like African swine fever (ASF) and avian influenza (bird flu).

In a recent development, the DA has allocated some PHP2.3 billion under its 2023 budget for the establishment of three Cold Examination Facility in Agriculture (CEFA) centers (one each in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao), to serve as border inspection facilities for agricultural imports.

Chen noted, however, that the DA's soon-to-rise CEFA center in Luzon will be built in Angat, Bulacan, which is "about 50 kilometers away from the Port of Manila."

He expressed preference for a border inspection facility that is closer to where imported meat is offloaded.

The CEFA initiative is intended to prevent the transmission of diseases carried by agricultural imports while also curbing smuggling.



Rice import plan decided this week

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said the government will decide within the week on a possible government-to-government (G2G) rice importation to replenish the National Food Authority's buffer stock.

Rex Estoperez, DA spokesperson, told reporters yesterday under the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), only the President has the authority to call for the importation of rice in case of emergency.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. who is concurrent secretary of DA earlier indicated plans for a G2G rice deal with India.

Marcos said the importation

is being considered to cushion the potential impact of El Niño and the recent typhoons on local harvest as well as to replenish NEA's buffer stock which is only good for 1.56 days to date.

"The private sector continues to import but it seems that they are currently adamant because prices are so high. If we still have an inventory, what's important is we can add more. We don't know when the next storm will be or if there will be another calamity," Estoperez said.

He said inter-agency meetings will be conducted in relation to the planned rice importation.

The RTL empowers the Presi-

dent to act with full delegated authority "in the event of any imminent or forecasted shortage or such other situation requiring government intervention..."

The law also states the President is empowered for a limited period and/or a specified volume, to allow the importation at a lower applied tariff rate to address the situation but such order shall take effect immediately and can only be issued when Congress is not in session.

Based on public markets monitoring by the DA in the National Capital Region as of yesterday,

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RICE

the per kg price of imported rice ranges from P49 to P58 for special variety; P46 to P50 for premium and; P44 to P48 for well milled.

No data is available on the price of regular milled.

For local rice, special variety is at P48 to P60 per kg; premium at P44 to P49 per kg; well-milled at P41 to P49 per kg; and regular milled at P37 to P44 per kg. -Jed Macapagal



GOV'T MULLS OVER GOV'T-TO-GOV'T IMPORTATION

PH'S RICE BUFFER STOCK NOW SEVEN-DAY SHORT OF SAFE LEVEL, ACCORDING TO NFA

By **Jordeene B. Lagare**
@jordeenelagare

The country's rice stockpile is good for only two days, falling short of the minimum inventory requirement to help the Philippines ride through emergencies or calamities, according to the **National Food Authority (NFA)**.

In a report, the NFA said the buffer stock stood at 1.22 million bags or 60,819.95 metric tons (MT), good for just two days. A safe buffer stock should last nine days, according to an official.

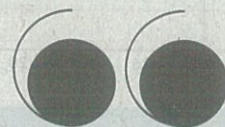
The NFA pegged the dai-

ly rice consumption rate at 679,670 bags or 33,983.5 MT for the period.

The figure was significantly lower than 3.14 million bags or 157,154.85 MT, equivalent to 4.68 days, recorded in the same period a year ago.

For last year, the food agency noted the daily rice consumption rate was estimated at 671,720 bags or 33,586 MT.

With the declining buffer stock, the Marcos administration is set to decide this week whether or not to import rice through a government-to-government (G2G) deal, according to



[The] private sector can import anytime [but pricess will be higher]

Rex Estoperez
Agriculture Assistant Secretary

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Rex Estoperez.

Striking a G2G deal with India was among the options the government was exploring to stabilize domestic supply and soften prices at the retail level, he said in an interview on Monday.

Among the factors that would be taken into consideration include the impact of the recent weather disturbances on the local industry, the volume of rice to be imported and price spikes in the global market.

He also said the "private sector can import anytime [although the prices will be higher]."

Based on the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), the President can authorize importation at a lower tariff rate in the event of "any imminent or forecasted shortage, or such other situation requiring government intervention."

The President may only do so when Congress is not in session.

The NFA's mandate under the law is limited to maintaining a sufficient rice buffer stock for emergency situations and sustaining the disaster relief programs of the government during natural or man-made

calamities. NFA can only source supplies from local farmers.

The RTL, on the other hand, liberalized the trading of rice when it allowed unlimited importation of rice.

As of Monday, locally produced rice costs P37 to P60 per kilogram, higher than the P38 to P50 per kg prevailing prices last year, according to the Department of Agriculture's price monitoring.

Imported rice ranges from P44 to P58 per kg, compared to P38 to P52 per kg previously. Imported regular milled rice is not available in public markets. **INQ**

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6 ex-DA execs cleared in fertilizer scam

The Sandiganbayan has acquitted six former officials of the Department of Agriculture (DA) office in Davao region in a graft case involving the purchase of P4.92 million worth of fertilizer and farm implements in 2004.

In a 44-page decision promulgated on July 28, the anti-graft court's Third Division said the Office of the Ombudsman failed to prove its allegations that the defendants violated Section 3(e) of Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

The law prohibits public officials from giving unwarranted benefits, advantage or preference to a private party or from causing undue injury to any party including the government.

Cleared were former DA regional technical director Romulo Palcon, administrative officer Godofredo Ramos, budget officer Gilda Cordero-Panal, accountant Mariflor Garcia, and cashiers Rita Retino and Corazon Ebero.

The Third Division said there was no proof showing the winning bidders conspired with any member of the bids and awards committee, or the accused conspired among themselves.

The anti-graft court earlier dismissed the charges filed against former DA regional executive director Roger Chio and officer-in-charge Carlos Mendoza due to their deaths.

It ordered the case against former administrative division chief Francisco Agustin archived as the respondent remains at-large.

Filed by the ombudsman in 2018, the case stemmed from the disbursement of P4.92 million for the purchase of fertilizer and farm implements between April and November 2004.

The ombudsman said the items were procured from the Everland Agri Corp., Mintal Fruit Nursery and Asian Hybrid Technology Inc. despite the lack of bidding, screening and proof of contract award.

The Third Division said that while there may have been violations in the procurement process, these were not sufficient to convict the respondents as competitive biddings were held prior to the awarding of contracts.

— Elizabeth Marcelo



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NFA rice inventory drops to under two days' worth of consumption

THE rice inventory held by the **National Food Authority (NFA)** is currently equivalent to 1.56 days' demand, well below the nine days targeted by the agency, due to high domestic buying prices, the Department of Agriculture said.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Rex C. Estoperez told reporters on Monday that the NFA's holdings totaled 50,000 metric tons (MT) as of July 27, considerably below the 300,000 MT level required to meet nine days' demand because private traders are outbidding the NFA.

The national daily consumption rate is equivalent to 679,670 bags or 33,983.5 MT, according to the NFA.

"As of now, it seems that the NFA is not able to buy from farmers because of the high price. The private sector can buy (unmilled rice, or palay) between P21-P23 per kilo (while) the NFA buys at P19," he said.

"Istriкто kasi ang NFA sa kanyang tinatawag na equivalent net weight (The NFA is strict in buying only equivalent net weight) as the P19 buying price is for clean and dry palay, while the private traders buy freshly harvested pa-

lay at P21-P23. The NFA cannot compete," he added.

Under Republic Act No. 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law, the NFA has been stripped of its power to import rice and has been reduced to maintaining an emergency inventory from domestically-grown rice.

Mr. Estoperez said that the NFA Council will submit a recommendation to the President to reconsider the NFA buying price and measures to build up inventory.

The NFA Council is headed by President Ferdinand R. Marcos,

Jr., who is also the Secretary of Agriculture, while NFA Administrator Roderico R. Bioco serves as vice-chairman.

Mr. Estoperez said that Mr. Marcos will meet with various agencies to discuss measures to increase rice stocks, including imports.

"Our inter agency group will update the President tomorrow whether to finalize (import deals), what volume, where to source, on a government-to-government basis," he said. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**



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Sibuyas, kamatis, kalabasa naharang sa pasaherong galing Korea

Muling nakakumpiska ang Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) sa Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) ng iba't ibang agri products dala ng dalawang babaeng pasahero mula Korea.

Ayon sa BPI, pasado alas-11:00 nang umaga kahapon nang dumating ang Asiana Airlines flight OZ-701 sakay ang dalawang pasaherong may dalang 15kgs na puting sibuyas.

Kinumpiska rin ng BPI ang dala naman ng isa pang pasaherong kasabay

ng isa pang pasahero ang .5kgs na kamatis, 2kgs na broccoli, 1kg na kalabasa, 2kgs na blueberries, 1kg. na asparagus at .5kgs na Zucchini.

Ang mga naturang produkto ay naharang ng Bureau of Customs sa NAIA Terminal 1 kung walang maipakitang certificate ang dalawang pasahero dahilang para kumpiskahin ito ng BPI.

Ang mga naturang produkto ay dadalhin ng PBI sa kanilang facility para sa tamang disposal.
(Otto Osorio)

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Egay-enhanced 'habagat' rains, Falcon inundate parts of Central Luzon, NCR

By MANILA BULLETIN TEAM

The southwest monsoon or "habagat" enhanced by super typhoon Egay and typhoon Falcon inundated several parts of Central Luzon and Metro Manila in knee-deep to waist-deep waters, causing the mass evacuation of residents.

The situation in these areas may worsen as the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said on Monday afternoon, July 31, that the southwest monsoon, now enhanced by Falcon, may continue to bring significant

amount of rainfall over parts of Luzon and Visayas in the next three days.

PAGASA last located the center of Falcon's eye 1,020 kilometers east-northeast of extreme Northern Luzon as of 4 p.m. Monday.

It was moving north-northwest at 15 kilometers per hour (kph) and continues to strengthen, with maximum sustained winds of 165 kph near the center and gusts of up to 205 kph.

If Falcon maintains its current speed and track, it will be outside the country's area of responsibility this afternoon or ► **3**

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Egay-enhanced 'habagat' rains, Falcon inundate parts of Central Luzon, NCR 1◀

tonight, PAGASA said.

With the impact of the southwest monsoon, emergency responders and Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) units in Central Luzon provinces were using rescue boats to secure residents in highly submerged areas, with the assistance from the military. Trucks and cranes were seen being used to transport some citizens through the knee-deep to waist-deep floods.

Bataan

On July 29, Bataan Governor Jose Enrique Garcia placed the province under a state of calamity through Provincial Resolution No. 321.

Garcia cited severe flooding in low-lying areas and significant damage to infrastructure and agricultural crops such as wheat and corn as reasons for the declaration.

Damage to the province's agricultural and fisheries sectors was estimated at ₱22,381,052, the mayor noted.

The most affected areas were Dinalupihan, Morong, Bagac, Samal, and Limay.

The Bataan PDRRMO reported 639 families or 2,357 individuals are housed in the province's evacuation sites. The provincial government has provided around 527 food packs, 475 hygiene kits, and 55 mats for the evacuees since Friday, July 28.

As of July 31, 121,297 families or 598,590 individuals have been affected by the storm, said the PDRRMO.

Bulacan

In Bulacan, Governor Daniel R. Fernando said 15 municipalities and two cities in the province are still affected by flooding.

A total of 5,000 families (17,000 individuals) temporarily sought refuge in several evacuation sites as of Monday, July 31.

He said heavy flooding in the province is due to the continuous heavy rains which started last week and worsened after excess water from the Ipo and Bustos Dams were gradually released to prevent overflow.

The local government also sent aid to the evacuated families including relief goods, hot meals, food and other necessities while trucks were deployed to provide free rides to stranded passengers.

On July 29 and 30, the municipalities of Calumpit and Hagonoy in the province

were placed under a state of calamity, respectively, after more than 40 villages were submerged in floodwaters which caused damage to agriculture, infrastructure, and livelihood of the residents.

Calumpit Mayor Lem Faustino and Hagonoy Mayor Baby Manlapaz provided relief packs, food, and medicines to the affected families.

Pampanga

The municipal governments of Sto. Tomas, Macabebe, San Simon, and San Luis in Pampanga have all declared a state of calamity on July 29 and 30.

Officials of Macabebe approved Resolution No. 188 which states that its agri-fisheries industry has suffered losses amounting to ₱119,320,448. Some 24,561 families or 79,200 individuals were affected in the municipality, with 211 families or 612 individuals now housed in evacuation centers.

The major thoroughfares in the municipality were also flooded and impassable to almost all types of vehicles, the municipal government added.

In Sto. Tomas, 2,587 families (9,339 individuals) have fled their homes amid the floods. As per Municipal Agriculture Office (MAO), damage to the agricultural sector was placed at ₱2,500,000, and ₱4,750,000 to the fisheries sector.

According to Resolution No. 23-046 of the government of San Simon, "almost all families within the municipality whose homes are under rainwater clamor for government assistance to monetarily ease their mental anguish and agony caused by the massive floodings."

Meanwhile, in San Luis, "15 out of 17 barangays are submerged in flood water due to non-stop heavy rains and the overflowing of Pampanga River," as indicated in Resolution No. 66. The state of calamity declaration will allow the government to "extend relief assistance to affected families and repair damages."

The Pampanga DRRMO said on July 31 that 227 barangays are flooded, affecting around 512,000 individuals.

Pampanga Gov. Dennis Pineda distributed around 18,339 food packs to residents in Candaba (2,700), City of San Fernando (1,840), San Simon (3,000), Sto. Tomas (2,000), Minalin (3,000), and San Luis (3,000) throughout the weekend.



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Tarlac, Zambales

Several areas in the provinces of Tarlac and Zambales also experienced flooding.

The La Paz-Victoria, Sta. Rosa-Tarlac, and Paniqui-Camiling-Wawa Roads in Tarlac, as well as the Olongapo-Bugallon Road are flooded, according to the DPWH Region III. Ankle-high floods on the National Road in Sitio Lalec, Barangay Sindol in San Felipe, Zambales, have also been reported.

Zambales Gov. Hermogenes Ebdane Jr. and Tarlac Gov. Susan A. Yap personally inspected and handed out relief packs to families affected in their respective areas of responsibility.

Metro Manila

The Quezon, Caloocan, Malabon, and Valenzuela City governments listed over 1,000 families who are now sheltered in the cities' evacuation centers on Sunday and Monday, July 31.

A total of 297 families or 1,073 individuals were evacuated in Valenzuela as of Monday while over 1,322 families are sheltered in Quezon City's evacuation sites. A total of 185 families from Barangay 183, Caloocan City and 10 families in Barangay Longos, Malabon City were also evacuated. Meanwhile, the Navotas City government said that no families were evacuated while flood waters immediately subsided after the heavy downpour.

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte, Valenzuela City Mayor Weslie Gatchalian, Malabon City Mayor Jeannie Sandoval, and Caloocan City Mayor Dale Gonzalo Malapitan all visited the evacuation sites to check the situation of the residents and provide aid such as food packs, hot meals, medical assistance, and other necessities. They also assured that help will be delivered to the evacuees until it is safe for them to return to their homes.

In Valenzuela and Malabon, several roads in different villages reportedly experienced up to 14 inches of flood on Saturday, July 29, and Sunday, July 30, where some became impassable to different types of vehicles.

Malapitan led the inspection of flood-prone areas in Caloocan on Sunday, including Dona Aurora in Barangay 177, Phase 6 in Barangay 178, Crispulo Street and Quirino Highway in Barangay 180.

Navotas City Mayor John Reynald Tiangco ordered canal declogging in sev-

eral parts of the city to prevent flooding.

Metro Manila mayors met with their local disaster risk reduction and management and emergency teams and ordered the deployment of rescue equipment and vehicles to provide help to residents, including stranded passengers amid the inclement weather.

Meanwhile, gutter-deep floods covered low-lying areas along Recto and Taft Avenues in Manila while tire-deep floods were reported on Taft corner NBI and Padre Faura on July 27. The Manila DRRMO also reported knee-deep floods on Kalaw Avenue on July 28 and 29.

The water level of Marikina River reached 16 meters, triggering the second alarm of the early warning system amid both Egay on July 27, and the monsoon rains enhanced by

Falcon on July 29.

In Taguig City, 23 families were evacuated after a landslide occurred on C5 Road in Barangay Western Bicutan on July 27. On July 30, 180 families were preemptively evacuated due to continuous heavy rains.

MMC stresses coordination

Metro Manila Council (MMC) President and San Juan City Mayor Francis Zamora stressed the importance of coordination between the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and local government units in mitigating the adverse effects of the weather phenomenon. (With reports from Khriscielle Yalao, Aaron Dioquino, Diann Calucin, Freddie Velez, Patrick Garcia, Richielyn Canlas, Jonathan Hicap, and Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz)



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'Egay' death toll now 25; damage to agri at P5.5B

BY VICTOR REYES

THE death toll from super typhoon "Egay" yesterday rose to 25 as damage to infrastructure and agriculture increased to P5.47 billion and the affected people reached more than two million.

Egay is so far the country's deadliest and most destructive tropical cyclone for this year. The population it affected is the largest compared to four previous tropical cyclones this year — "Amang," "Betty," "Chedeng," and "Dodong."

Meanwhile, severe tropical storm "Falcon" intensified into a typhoon, from severe tropical storm, on Sunday night. Falcon, which is not expected to make landfall, was some 1,020 km east northeast of extreme northern Luzon as of 4 p.m. yesterday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said.

Falcon is not directly affecting the country but is enhancing the southwest monsoon which is bringing rains to parts of Luzon, including Metro Manila, and the Visayas.

Falcon may exit the Philippine area of responsibility on Tuesday afternoon or evening, PAGASA said.

The Camp Aguinaldo-based National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said 12 of the deaths were in Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).

Eight died in the Ilocos region, three in the Calabarzon region, and two in the Western Visayas region.

It said only two of these deaths — one in Calabarzon and one Western Visayas — have been validated while the rest are still subject to validation process.

Twenty are still missing (all validated) and subject to ongoing search and rescue operations and 52 were injured (39 validated and 13 for validation), the NDRRMC said.

The NDRRMC also reported P5.47 billion damage to infrastructure and agriculture.

It said damage to infrastructure in Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Western Visayas and CAR is now at P3.51 billion, with the bulk (P2.25 billion) from CAR.

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) reported P5.2 billion worth of damage to infrastructure — P1.053 billion for roads, P162.6 million for bridges, and P3.982

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EGAY

billion for flood-control structures.

The NDRRMC said damage to agriculture was placed at P1.96 billion in Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Western Visayas, BARMM and CAR.

Ilocos registered a P1.02 billion in damage to agriculture while Central Luzon had P595 million.

The NDRRMC also reported that 654,837 families or 2,397,336 individuals were affected. They are from 4,111 barangays in 13 regions -- Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Western Mindanao, Northern Mindanao, Davao, Soccsargen, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) and the National Capital Region (NCR) or Metro Manila.

Of the number, 13,828 families (50,987 individuals) are still in 737 evacuation centers and 63,086 families (262,008 individuals) are living with relatives or friends.

Central Luzon had the highest number of affected population at 329,470 families (1,149,314 individuals), followed by Cagayan with 133,999 families (585,818 individuals) and CAR with 102,648 families or 354,060 individuals.

STATE OF CALAMITY

The NDRRMC said the provincial governments of Ilocos Sur, Bataan,

Cavite, Abra and Mountain Province have placed their respective areas under state of calamity.

Cagayan province said it is also under a state of calamity.

The NDRRMC said the towns of Luna and Bangar in La Union; Sablayan in Occidental Mindoro; Sanchez Mira and Abulug in Cagayan; Paombong and Pulilan in Bulacan; and Macabebe, San Luis, San Simon at Santo Tomas in Pangasinana are also under state of calamity.

The Department of Education said 169 schools in nine regions were damaged by Egay. These are in CAR, NCR, Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, and Eastern Visayas.

"The total estimated cost for reconstruction and rehabilitation is at P810 million," the DepEd said.

Meanwhile, 68 schools in Cagayan Valley, CAR, Central Luzon and Western Visayas are being used as evacuation centers.

Under DepEd Order No.37 issued by Vice President and DepEd Secretary Sara Duterte schools may be used as an immediate evacuation sites in times of calamities but not for more than 15 days. -30-

ASSISTANCE

Health Secretary Teodoro Herbosa said he has directed field offices of the Department of Health to quickly release of health emergency allowances (HEAs) to health workers who are in areas af-

ected by Egay and who served during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I'll ask our people to concentrate in Region 1 and 2, which were hit by Egay so that our health workers there can use additional funds," said Herbosa.

He said the move is similar to what the DOH did for medical frontliners in Bicol.

"I have instructed our people to give the allowances for health workers in Albay because Mayon Volcano was erupting. The people will need the extra money," he said.

All medical frontliners are entitled to P5,000 for every month they served during the period of State of Public Health Emergency. Delays in the release and distribution of the health emergency allowances, however, have constantly hounded the DOH.

Herbosa said the DOH is exerting efforts to hasten the distribution of all the delayed allowances.

"The idea is to hasten it and make it faster. We will get it to them by the end of this year. Those who won't get them this year, they will receive it next year," he said.

"Hopefully, we can already distribute all the allowances for 2021, 2022, and 2023 by 2024. They shouldn't worry. It is rather slow but we will give it," added Herbosa.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development government has distributed some P131.9 million worth of assistance to over 2.6 million people in 13 regions affected by Egay and the

southwest monsoon.

This includes family food packs, non-food items and cash aid under the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis.

At the House, Speaker Martin Romualdez and Ako Bicol party-list Rep. Zaldy Co, chair of the House committee on appropriations, filed House Bill (HB) No.8350 which seeks to make the secretary of the Department of the Public Works and Highways (DPWH) the vice chairman of the NDRRMC.

Under the bill, the public works secretary is added to the NDRRMC's composition to oversee infrastructure rehabilitation and repair in times of natural disasters by amending some provisions of Republic Act (RA) No.10121, also known as the "Philippine Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Act of 2010."

The NDRRMC, which is chaired by the defense secretary, has other Cabinet secretaries as vice chairmen for their respective sectors, which excludes infrastructure.

"It has been observed, however, that because of the immense destruction sustained by various government infrastructures during these disasters, many of which damages suffer from state of disrepair, it becomes paramount that another vice chairpersonship is created for the infrastructure rehabilitation and repair be headed by the Secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways," the bill said. - *With Myla Iglesias, Asbzel Hachero, Jocelyn Montemayor, Gerard Naval and Wendell Vigilia*

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'Egay' death toll climbs to 25; infra and farm damage reach P5 billion

By RENE ACOSTA

[@reneacostaBM](#)

THE National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) on Monday reported that more than P5 billion worth of infrastructure projects and agricultural products have been damaged,

while 25 people perished due to the combined effects of typhoon "Egay" and the prevailing southwest monsoon.

NDRRMC said heavy rains, floods and landslides damaged at least P3,510,282,156.58 worth of government projects.

These included roads, bridges, flood control projects, government

facilities, schools, private buildings and utility services.

On the other hand, crops, livestock, poultry and fisheries products also incurred an estimated loss of P1,965,320,443.03, while an additional P9,977,216.22 worth of vehicles, hospital equipment and medicines were damaged.

As a result, at least 106 cities

and municipalities have already declared a state of calamity in order to grapple with the devastation of Egay and the torrential monsoon rain.

While the number of fatalities has swelled to 25, this is still being validated by the NDRRMC, which also said that about 52 people were injured and another 20 are still missing.

The NDRRMC said that at least 654,837 families or 2,397,336 individuals in 4,111 barangays in 13 regions were affected by Egay, which forced the evacuation of 312,995 people, aside from

17,349 persons that were preemptively evacuated.

As of Monday, 321 cities and municipalities were still without power

or water supply and with toppled communication lines.

At least 399 road sections and 32 bridges also remained flooded, while at least 35,855 houses were either damaged or totally destroyed.

The NDRRMC said the government has already provided P146,687,925.51 worth of assistance to affected communities.



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'Egay' destroys P64M in Negros agriculture

BACOLOD CITY: Floods caused by heavy rains enhanced by Super Typhoon "Egay" destroyed P46,098,418 of agriculture, livestock and fishery products in Negros Occidental, data from the final situational report of the Office of the Provincial Agriculturist showed.

The hardest hit was rice worth P38,056,228.11; high-value crops, P3,336,490; corn, P3,725,700; and fisheries, P980,000.

The report also showed that flooding also affected 112 barangay (villages).

The areas affected were San Carlos City, Cadiz City, EB Mag-

alona, La Carlota City, Valladolid, Pulupandan, Pontevedra, San Enrique, Bago City, La Castellana, Binalbagan, Sipalay City, Candoni, Cauayan, Ilog, Calatrava, Cauayan, Hinobaan, Binalbagan and Silay City.

Meanwhile, in its final report on the effects of Typhoon Egay dated July 29, the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Division said 112 barangay of Negros Occidental were effected.

The report also said that 15,138 families, or 61,022 individuals, were affected.

A total of 1,645 houses were

damaged by the almost three days of continuous rain that hit the province.

Of the total number, 60 were totally damaged and 1,585 were partially damaged, data show.

The damaged houses are in 45 barangay of 15 LGUs that were affected in the province.

The Provincial Social Welfare Development Office (PSWDO) also reported that they distributed 1,810 family food packs in six local government units (LGUs).

The hardest hit was the coastal municipality of San Enrique, with 5,579 families composed of 19,594 persons affected, and 426

partially damaged houses and 16 totally damaged, a report from the PSWDO showed.

The report also said that nine of its 10 barangay were hit by the flooding.

Mayor Jilson Tubillara said on Monday that the town has been put under a state of calamity.

Tubillara said this was the first time that the town was hit by flash floods, as the rivers and tributaries from the surrounding areas coincided with the high tide.

"Fortunately, we have cleared our waterways, so the flooding subsided after a few hours," the mayor said. **EUGENEY. ADIONG**



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Damage from 'Egay' rises to P5.5 billion

THE estimated overall damage from Typhoon "Egay" has gone up to P5.5 billion, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council reported on Monday.

Damage to agriculture was at P1,965,320,443 and to infrastructure at P3,510,282,156, the NDRRMC said.

It also confirmed 25 deaths related to the typhoon and 20 people still missing.

A total of 654,837 families, or 2,397,336 persons, in 13 regions were affected by Egay, which was enhanced by the habagat or southwest

monsoon.

The NDRRMC said 17,349 people from Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan), and Western Visayas were evacuated even before the typhoon hit.

A total of 312,995 persons were displaced, and there were 849 incidents of flooding and landslides in Ilocos, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Western and

► 'Egay' A8

■ 'EGAY' FROM A1

Damage from 'Egay'

Eastern Visayas, Soccsksargen (South Cotabato, Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat, Sarangani and General Santos), and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). A total of 35,955 houses were damaged.

The agency said 114,565 farmers and fisherfolk were affected by Egay.

Close to 149,000 hectares of crops were damaged, and losses to livestock, poultry and fisheries were P167,000.

The NDRRMC said 106 cities and mu-

nicipalities in the 13 regions declared a state of calamity.

Floods closed down about 399 road sections and 32 bridges.

Only 60 percent of the 306 cities and municipalities whose power was cut during the storm had power back on as of Monday.

The government has distributed P146,687,925.51 worth of assistance to stricken areas.

**FRANCO JOSE C. BAROÑA
AND ARLIE O. CALALO**

Ngayong araw na ito ay ise-share ko sa inyo ang natatangi o kakai-bang garden sa North Caloocan na pinatatakbo ng mga kababayan na-ting pawang may ka-pansanan o Person With Disabilities (PWDs) ito ay

o mushroom ang mga PWDs sa LERC.

Sinabi ni Arceno, nag-aalaga rin sila ng free range chicken at may-roon silang paitluga, rabbit raising at marami pang iba.

Masarap na masus-



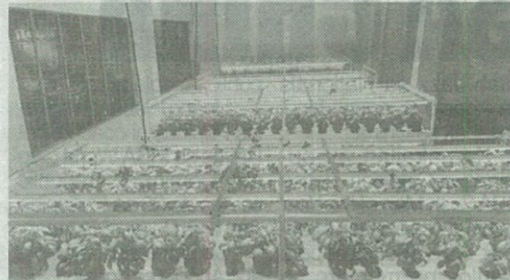
Hindi hadlang ang kapansanan...

LERC URBAN FARMS

ang LERC Urban Farms. Ang layunin ng Livelihood, Education, and Rehabilitation Center (LERC) Urban Farms ay mag-produce ng masustansiyang pag-

tansiya pa ang gawang iba't ibang uri ng tinapay ng mga PWDs sa LERC dahil ang majority sa kanilang ingredients ay mula rin sa kanilang farm.

Sa pagbisita ng Mag-



Ang mga indoor plant na tanim at inaala-gaan ng mga PWDs.

kain sa pagtatanim ng iba't ibang uri ng gu-lay, prutas at herbs sa pamamagitan ng organi-kong pamamaraan.

Conventional farm-ing o pagtatanim sa lupa at hydroponics o pagtatanim sa tubig at aquaponics o pagtatanim sa tubig na may isda, indoor at outdoor ang ginagawang pagtatanim ng mga PWDs sa LERC Urban Farms na makikita sa Ascoville Road, Ba-rangay 185, Tala, Caloo-can City.

Ayon kay Ronald Arceno, Head Adminis-trator ng LERC Urban Farms, ang pagkakaroon ng kapansalan ay hindi hadlang sa kanila para magtanim, mag-produce ng masustansiyang pag-kain.

"Disability is not a hin-drance to be an active player of food production system. To engage in Urban integrated agri-culture is a big challenge in urban communities because of limited space and urban restriction poli-cies like sanitation. LERC overcomes these chal-lenges by using vari-ous technologies," Ani Arceno.

Ilan sa hydroponic products ng LERC Ur-ban Farms ay lettuce, petchay, mustasa, sweet basil, spearmint, kailaan kale, Thai basil at iba pa.

Organic, pesticide free, hand planted at hand harvested ang mga produce sa LERC Urban Farms.

Bukod sa iba't ibang tanim na halaman ay nagtatanim at nagpo-

sasakang Reporter sa LERC Urban Farms ay pinakyaw ang mga har-vest na itlog at gawang tinapay dahil sa kakai-bang lasa, masarap na at masustansiya pa.

May kakaibang varie-ty na patola na tanim ang mga PWDs sa LERC Ur-ban Farms na mistulang sawa ang haba.

Sinabi ni Arceno, mas masarap ang tanim



Ang kakaibang variety ng patola na tanim ng mga PWDs.

nilang patola kumpara sa regular na patola na nabibili sa merkado.

Sa mga bibisita at nais bumili ng mga gawang produkto ng mga PWDs sa LERC Urban Farms ay i-text o tawagan lang ninyo si Mhyles Huesec sa kanyang number na 09517247258 o bisita-hin ang kanilang face-book page LERC Urban Farms.

Maaari rin kayong magpadeliber sa inyong doorstep sa mga fresh produce sa LERC Urban Farms, same day har-vest, same day deliver,

Si Richard Arceno habang inaayos ang mga tanim.

Caloocan.

Sa darating na Sun-day, August 6, 2023, ganap na alas-7:00 ng umaga ay mapapanood ninyo sa OnePH, Cignal TV, Channel 1 ng TV-5

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

Para sa iba pang tips at sikreto sa pagta-tanim ng iba't ibang uri ng halaman ay maaari po kayong manood at makinig ng aking TV at Radio program na Masaganang Buhay tu-wing 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-sub-scribe sa aking Youtube Channel na ANG MAG-SASAKANG REPORT-ER para sa iba pang kaalaman at imporma-syon sa pagtatanim ng iba't ibang uri ng halaman sa pamamagitan ng or-ganikong pamamaraan.

Tuwing araw ng Martes ay regular ninyong mababasa ang aking kolum dito sa Pilipino Star Ngayon (PSN) ng Star Group of Publications.

Sa mga tanong at ko-mento ay maaari ninyo akong i-text, huwag po tawag, sa 09178675197. STAY SAFE, HAPPY FARMING, GOD BLESS

Malaya Business Insight

Date: AUG. 01, 2023 Page: ACQ



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Corn, wheat decline

SINGAPORE- Chicago corn slid for a fifth consecutive session on Monday, while soybeans dropped to a two-week low as expectations of milder weather in the US Midwest reduced concerns over supplies.

Wheat slid almost 2 percent, but was on track for a second month of gains with worries over Black Sea supplies driving prices higher in recent weeks.

"US weather is driving corn and soybeans lower," said one Singapore-based grains trader. "Wheat prices have dropped below \$7 a bushel, but the sup-

ply situation for wheat is still uncertain. Any further escalation in the Russia-Ukraine war can drive prices higher."

The most-active corn contract on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) was down 2.1 percent at \$5.19 a bushel and soybeans gave up 1.8 percent to \$13.57-1/2 a bushel, after declining to their lowest since July 14 at \$13.57 a bushel. Wheat fell 1.9 percent to \$6.90-3/4 a bushel.

In July, corn has risen around 5 percent, soybeans are up 1 percent and wheat climbed 6 percent. -

Reuters