

CLIPPINGS FOR SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2023

A. SEC. PBBM QUOTED

THE MANILA TIMES

Marcos mulls lower rice price cap as harvest season starts

MANILA BULLETIN

There's enough rice supply, but fixing agri is necessary – PBBM

Marcos unveils Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair

Marcos: No looming fishing ban in PH

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

No ban: BBM clarifies plan vs overfishing

BBM optimistic on lower rice prices

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

There will be no fishing ban in PH, President assures

Rice price cap may be lifted after harvest, Marcos hints

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL

About P10B fund eyed for irrigation, fertilizer subsidy

Bagong Pilipinas

Improving lives of those in agri sector neverending task- Macos

ABANTE TONITE

PBBM bagong Pilipinas serbisyo fair nilarga

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON

Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair binuksan ni PBBM

ABANTE

Walang fishing ban- PBBM

B. DA FAMILY

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

House to grant NIA request for P40-B additional budget

DA updates MAV policy

Bad eggs

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL

Crack down on rice smugglers, gov't urged

Expanded DA young farmers challenge to launch soon

C. AGRI-RELATED STORY

THE MANILA TIMES

Tougher penalties bs agri –smuggling sought

ABANTE TONITE

BOC kinakalkal Chinese mafia sa bigas smuggling

D. FOREIGN STORY

No stories



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos mulls lower rice price cap as harvest season starts

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is considering lowering the rice price cap once the harvest season kicks in as increased supply will pull down the cost of the Filipino staple.

Marcos, concurrent Agriculture chief, told reporters in Camarines Sur that market forces would be at work with the new rice harvests, and "we can reduce the price control we put in place."

Asked, however, how rice prices could be reduced without affecting any sector, the President said it was "impossible."

Marcos had approved a price cap on regular and well-milled rice to combat the rising prices, at P41 per kilogram and P45 per kilogram, respectively.

The President said that the government's intervention against price hikes will eventually decrease the prices of basic goods.

In a speech for a rice distribution program, Marcos said that the country has enough rice supplies, but existing problems were caused by lapses in distribution systems.

"There are still many things lacking in distribution. We have plenty of rice, but it is not distributed properly. That is why rice supply is not a problem in the Philippines. The Department of Agriculture said that the harvest for this year will be more abundant compared to the previous years, so the production side is well," he said.

The President also said that the present rice cycle system from planting to distribution will also have to be reassessed.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) said 2.3 million metric tons (MT) and 2.9 million MT are expected to be harvested in September and October, respectively.

These are based on the Philippine Rice Information System estimates as of August 14, Agriculture Undersecretary Leo Sebastian said.

"In all, for the second semester, or July to December, we estimate to produce more than 11 million metric tons, and barring strong typhoons in the remaining

► **RiceA8**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

■ RICE FROM A1

Marcos mulls

months of the year, we hope to hit the 20 million MT level for 2023 national palay output," he said.

The bulk of the 2.3 million MT harvest for September will be from the following provinces: Isabela (419,000+ MT), Cagayan (172,000+ MT), Iloilo (148,000+ MT), Nueva Ecija (137,000+ MT), North Cotabato (95,000+ MT), Leyte (91,000+ MT), Oriental Mindoro (77,000+ MT), Camarines Sur (76,000+ MT), Palawan (73,000+ MT), Bukidnon (61,000+ MT), Zamboanga del Sur (55,000+ MT), and Davao del Norte (52,000+ MT).

For October, 2.9 million MT are seen to be harvested from the following provinces: Nueva Ecija (440,000+ MT), Pangasinan (258,000+ MT), Tarlac (172,000+ MT), Isabela (163,000+ MT), Occidental Mindoro (153,000+ MT), Cagayan (151,000+ MT), Oriental Mindoro (110,000+ MT), Palawan (90,000+ MT), Bulacan (74,000+ MT), Iloilo (74,000+ MT), Bukidnon (69,000+ MT), Agusan del Sur (61,000+ MT), Ilocos Sur (59,000+ MT), Leyte (55,000+ MT), and Camarines Sur (53,000+ MT).

To further strengthen rice production, Sebastian said that for the 2023-2024 dry season, the DA would continue providing clustered rice farmers with needed high-yielding seeds, fertilizers, biofertilizers, soil ameliorants, farm machinery, and extension, financial and marketing support.

Expansion of irrigation

Meanwhile, Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez said that the President aims to bring P10 billion in excess collection from the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) this year to expand the country's irrigation capacity and subsidize farm inputs to cut production costs and increase income of farmers.

He also said that the House of Representatives may allocate an additional P40 billion funding for irrigation projects under the 2024 national budget to support Marcos' move to increase agricultural production.

The RCEF is a fund under the Rice Tariffication Law that allows rice farmers to be competitive and increase their income amid liberalization of the Philippine rice trade policy including, among other provisions, the lifting of quantitative restriction on rice import and replacing it with tariff.

Romualdez, who was at the presentation of solar-powered irrigation projects by the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) in San Rafael, Bulacan, said that the excess collections would act as an "investment" of the President to farmers so that earnings from the crop yields will be passed on as savings so that rice prices may go down.

Marcos' gesture of using the excess collection from the RCEF is a manifestation of his firm resolve to boost agricultural production, particularly of rice, to ensure that there is a stable supply of food for every Filipino family while also improv-

ing the lives of farmers, Romualdez said.

Romualdez also said that the House would grant NIA's request to restore the P90 billion that was removed from its proposed 2024 budget for its irrigation projects.

He also vowed support for the creation of additional solar irrigation systems such as the one launched in San Rafael, which can irrigate 150 hectares of land that would benefit 114 farmers and their families.

No fish ban

In another development, the President clarified that the government will not impose a fishing ban as it will affect the income of the country's small-scale fishermen.

Marcos in Camarines Sur said what will be enforced is a restriction in breeding areas.

"I did not explain it well. I was not talking about a fishing ban. What I meant was we shouldn't fish in breeding areas so fish can replenish stock," said Marcos.

The President underscored the importance of protecting fish breeding grounds to ensure an abundant supply of fish in the Philippines and that farmers' source of income will not be affected.

Marcos has emphasized the need to address overfishing and boost the country's fish population and aquaculture in the country.

"We must not overfish so we still have enough supply for the next season. So that's what we are looking at now," the President said, explaining why the fishing ban must be imposed, during his visit to Zamboanga City on Tuesday.

Date: SEPT. 24, 2023 Page: 124



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

There's enough rice supply, but fixing agri is necessary – PBBM

President Marcos reassured the public that the Philippines has enough supply of rice, but admitted that the agriculture sector needs to be fixed.

Marcos said this when he led the

distribution of sacks of rice worth ₱2.5 million to 2,000 indigent families and indigenous peoples at the University of Saint Anthony in Iriga, Camarines Sur, on Saturday, Sept. 23.

► 4

There's enough rice supply, but fixing agri is necessary – PBBM 1◀

In his speech, the President assured the public that the Philippines has enough supply of rice.

"We have plenty of rice but we haven't been getting them out properly. That's why supply is not a problem in the Philippines," he said. "The Department of Agriculture said we have better harvest this year than last year so our production side is good."

Marcos explained that he went to Camarines Sur to distribute rice as he recognized the increasing price of the staple grain.

However, he admitted that the

measures the government had implemented so far, like the price cap, were insufficient.

"It's still not enough. We need to distribute more," he said. "We need to fix the system—from planting, research and development, processing, and distribution to retail."

In an interview following the event, the President acknowledged that his government must immediately implement measures to fix the agriculture sector.

"We cannot do what we want if we won't fix the agriculture sector," he said. (Argyll Cyrus Geducos)



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE



Marcos unveils Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair

AT A GLANCE

- Each province to have own Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair
- Project speeds up delivery of gov't programs and services

By ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

President Marcos has assured Filipinos that his administration will serve them better as he hopes that the services offered by the newly launched Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair will help the public

amid trying times.

In his speech, the President said the fair consolidates various programs and services from different national government agencies in one venue, including the delivery of several government assistance.

"We gathered together ► 4

PBBM IN BICOL — President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. underscores before a large audience at the University of Saint Anthony (USANT) Forum Building in Iriga City on Saturday, Sept. 23, 2023 that there is no shortage in the supply of rice in the country. The President distributed rice to indigent families and indigenous peoples at the event, and also led the nationwide simultaneous launch of the 'Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo' Fair. (Noel B. Pabalate)



Marcos unveils Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair 1◀

several agencies here to collectively deliver benefits that will alleviate your conditions," Marcos said while leading the nationwide simultaneous launch of the Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair in Nabua, Camarines Sur, on Saturday, Sept. 23. "Rest assured, we will continue to improve our service to the people."

The two-day Serbisyo Fair hosts 75 programs from 29 government agencies. Among the services and programs offered are:

- Kadiwa ng Pangulo
- Passport on Wheels
- National ID application
- Driver's license registration assistance
- NBI and police clearance

"You can avail yourselves of all those services here so that you don't

have to go far just to get them," the President said.

In addition, the Department of Agriculture (DA) distributed various farming equipment to farmers while the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) distributed motor bancas and fish cage packages to fishermen.

The Department of Health (DOH) distributed wheelchairs for the sick and the elderly.

Meanwhile, President Marcos urged the people to work together to overcome challenges and to realize the dream of a "Bagong Pilipinas" (New Philippines).

"We share the dream of a Bagong Pilipinas that we can proudly pass on to our children and the generations to come," he said. "With your help, we

can overcome any challenge in life. As long as we work together, there is nothing we can't handle."

According to Malacañang, the Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair is intended to be replicated in every province to speed up the delivery of government services across the country.

"This is just one of several flagship programs and projects being launched under the all-inclusive 'Bagong Pilipinas' brand of governance and leadership campaign, highlighting the Administration's commitment toward the attainment of comprehensive policy reforms and full economic recovery," it said.

The caravan is held simultaneously in Monkayo, Davao de Oro; Tolosa, Leyte; and Laoag, Ilocos Norte.

Date: SEPT. 24, 2023 Page: 5



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos: No looming fishing ban in PH

By ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

President Marcos clarified that the government will not impose a fishing ban in the country as this could have adverse effects on the livelihood of local fishermen.

Marcos said this after he was earlier quoted as saying that the government was considering imposing a fishing ban in certain areas to address overfishing.

In an interview in Iriga, Camarines Sur, the President said the government would only impose a fishing restriction in the breeding areas.

"I was not clear with my explanation. I was not talking about a fishing ban," he admitted. "What I meant was let's not fish in the breeding areas so the fish could propagate."

Marcos firmly stated that the government would not impose a

fishing ban as it would affect the income of small-scale fisherfolk.

"There won't be a fishing ban. The people won't make a living," he said. "We'll identify the breeding grounds, take care of them, and restrict entry there for the time being, so our fisherfolk will have abundant catch later on."

According to the President, he talked to some of the fishermen in Camarines Sur and they informed him of their decreasing catch.

This week, President Marcos, who concurrently heads the Department of Agriculture (DA), emphasized the need to limit fishing in some parts of the country to ensure supply for the next season.

In addition, he said the government will put up more cold storage facilities and provide ice machines to help fishermen prevent spoilage of their catch.

Date: SEPT. 24, 2023 Page: 1 of 2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

No ban: BBM clarifies plan vs overfishing

The government is not planning to implement a fishing ban, **President Marcos** clarified yesterday, saying what he meant in making such an announcement earlier was prohibiting the catching of

fish in areas where they are breeding.

Earlier this week, Marcos said there should be no fishing in areas where fishes are being bred, explaining that such a restriction will increase

the country's fish stock. His statement was construed as a plan to impose a fishing ban.

But in a media interview in Camarines Sur, Marcos admitted that he did not explain well

Turn to Page 2

No ban From Page 1

the plan to increase the fish population.

"My explanation was not good. I was not referring to a fishing ban. What I was saying was we should not fish in breeding so that the fish will increase," the President said in Filipino.

"But there will be no fishing ban. People will lose their livelihood," he stressed.

Marcos said he had spoken with fishermen who informed him that their catch had dwindled, hence the

need to take care of breeding grounds.

"Let us not enter those areas so our fishermen will catch many fishes," the Chief Executive added.

Last Tuesday, Marcos, also the agriculture secretary, cited the importance of improving the country's fisheries sector as he vowed to put up more cold storage facilities to prevent spoilage. He noted that up to 30 percent of the fish catch is degraded or damaged.

"We will come up with an area for processing. That is our plan for fisheries," he said in an interview in Zamboanga City. — **Alexis Romero**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BBM optimistic on lower rice prices

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Marcos expressed optimism yesterday that the harvesting of palay or unhusked rice would lower rice prices as he expressed readiness to ease rice price controls once the market prices of the food commodity go down.

Speaking to reporters in Camarines Sur, Marcos said it is impossible for price adjustments in agricultural goods not to affect other sectors, so the government has undertaken measures to address it.

He cited the imposition of rice price caps, the giving of assistance to small retailers affected by the price ceilings and the setting of higher buying prices for palay.

"I think once the harvest comes in, because it's coming in, we are already harvesting and when it comes in, I think we will

see prices going lower," Marcos, also the agriculture secretary, said in Filipino.

"Market forces. Maybe when the market has lower prices, we can ease the control measures we put in place," he added.

The Marcos administration has implemented price ceilings on regular milled and well-milled rice to mitigate the impact of soaring rice prices and ensure that the food staple remains accessible.

The price cap on regular milled rice is P41 per kilo while the price cap on well-milled rice is P45 per kilo.

The government is also providing financial aid to retailers affected by the policy, which took effect last Sept. 5.

The National Food Authority Council has also raised the buying prices for palay to augment the income of farmers.

The buying price has been

adjusted from P19 to P23 per kilo for dry palay and from P16 to P19 per kilo for wet palay.

In a recent video statement, the President said the production cost of farmers ranges from P14 to P15 per kilo, so the adjusted prices would increase their income.

Last Thursday, National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said the government would consider other options to stabilize rice prices since the implementation of price caps is just temporary.

Enough but...

In a speech during the distribution of rice to about 2,000 beneficiaries in Iriga City yesterday, Marcos gave assurance that the country has enough supply of the staple, but admitted that the distribution efforts have to be improved.

"The price was so high, so we were forced to set price caps. But the distribution is not enough," he said.

"We have lots of rice although they are not being released properly. So, the supply is not a problem in the Philippines," the President added.

Marcos said the DA is expecting a better palay harvest this year, but the government has to fix the system related to processes in the farm sector such as planting, research and development, processing, distribution, marketing and retail.

He expressed hope that the public would soon feel the improvements in the production side.

The rice distribution led by Marcos benefited households who are covered by the government's cash transfer program.

Date: SEPT. 24, 2023 Page: A5



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BUT FISHING DISCOURAGED IN BREEDING AREAS

THERE WILL BE NO FISHING BAN IN PH, PRESIDENT ASSURES

By **Nestor Corrales**
@NCorralesINQ

The government has not and will not impose a fishing ban in the country because it would adversely affect small fisherfolk, **President Marcos** said on Saturday, correcting a remark he made earlier.

"I was not able to explain it well," the President told reporters after leading the distribution of smuggled rice to indigents in Iriga City.

"I was not talking about a fishing ban. What I meant was, we should not fish in breeding

areas so the fish population will multiply," he said.

"There will be no fishing ban. People will lose their livelihood. [But] we will let the fish reproduce," he said, adding that overfishing in municipal waters remains a serious problem in the fisheries sector.

Republic Act No. 10654, or the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, does impose a fishing season for certain kinds of fish in specific waters at different times of the year, but the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) has been struggling to strictly implement such fishing seasons.

According to the latest published BFAR data (2021), more than 2.19 million people were involved in municipal fishing.

Top fish producer

Along with commercial fishers and aquaculturists, capture fishers produced 4.25 million metric tons (MT) in 2021, amounting to more than P302 billion—consistently one of the largest in the world.

According to the Southeast Asia Fisheries Development Center (Seafdec), the Philippines is one of the top fish producing countries in the world.

"The total volume of fisheries production in the Philippines in 2015 reached 4.65 million MT with the total value of \$ 7.26 billion," Seafdec said in its country report.

But the growth in the number of fisherfolk as well as the degradation of maritime resources and fishing grounds, particularly poaching in municipal waters, has begun to affect the sector.

The BFAR has tried to implement a fishing vessel identification system, but commercial fishers disputed the measure in court after they were prohibited

from turning off their radars before entering municipal waters.

Reclamation affects fish stocks

Fisherfolk group Pam-bansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) earlier said the President's plan to impose a fishing ban would only victimize small fishermen who "always fall prey to such strict fishing regulations."

The group pointed out that reclamation, conversion of fishing grounds and large-scale poaching activities are some of the culprits of the declining fish

stocks in the Philippines.

"There are around 187 reclamation projects across the country, as per the Philippine Reclamation Authority itself. These dump-and-fill projects wipe out productive marine and aquatic resources such as mangroves, coral reefs and other wetlands that result in dramatic dwindling of fish stocks," said Pamalakaya national chairperson Fernando Hicap.

But Mr. Marcos assured fisherfolk that the government would monitor and protect breeding grounds of fish to regrow the country's fish supply. **INQ**



Rice price caps may be lifted after harvest

President Marcos on Saturday said that with the harvest season coming in, prices in the market will stabilize and the government "can reduce the controls we have in place."

A5

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

Date: SEPT. 24, 2023 Page: A1 & A5



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Rice price cap may be lifted after harvest, Marcos hints

By Nestor Corrales
@NCorralesINQ

President Marcos on Saturday said the government could ease the price cap he imposed on rice once the cost in the market stabilizes, which he hopes would happen after the harvest season.

"We're harvesting now and when that comes in, I think we will see that prices will go down," the President told reporters in Iriga City. "Maybe if the market lowers the price, we can reduce the controls we have in place."

Mr. Marcos issued Executive Order No. 39 on Aug. 31, imposing price ceilings on rice in the whole country following the "alarming" increase in its retail prices.

The price ceiling for regular milled rice is P41 per kilogram while the cap on well-milled rice is at P45 per kg.

The National Food Authority,



FRESH HARVEST Rice retailer Eddie Pascual shows the newly harvested rice delivered to his stall in Marikina Public Market in Marikina City on Sept. 19. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

chaired by the President, has also set new buying prices per kilogram of P19 to P23 for dry palay and P16 to P19 for wet palay.

Gov't should fix system

Mr. Marcos was in Iriga to distribute P2.5 million worth of

rice to 2,000 indigent families in the University of Saint Anthony.

He pointed out that the Department of Agriculture reported that this year's rice production is higher than last year and "we have enough supply of

rice, but we have not released them properly."

But he admitted that the government should fix the agriculture system from planting, research and development, processing, distribution and marketing, to retail.

"It is impossible for the price of anything related in agriculture to move without affecting other sectors. That is fundamental," he said.

Mr. Marcos has been going around the country to distribute seized rice that was found to have been illegally imported.

The distributed rice was part of the 42,180 sacks of smuggled rice, worth P42 million, that were seized by the Bureau of Customs during a warehouse raid in Zamboanga City on Sept. 15.

Aside from distributing rice to indigent families, the President also visited Nabua town in Camarines Sur to launch the Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair,

touted by Malacañang as the country's biggest service caravan.

Service caravan

In a press statement, Presidential Communications Secretary Cheloy Velicaria-Garafil said the fair was meant to provide major government services to underprivileged Filipinos in various communities across the Philippines.

The fair was simultaneously launched in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte for Luzon; Toloza, Leyte for Visayas; and in Monkayo, Davao de Oro for Mindanao.

The caravan featured the government's flagship program "Kadiwa ng Pangulo," Passport on Wheels, driver's license and national ID registration, and the services of Pag-Ibig Fund, National Bureau of Investigation, and police clearance applications.

INQ



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

About P10B fund eyed for irrigation, fertilizer subsidy

By Jester Manalastas

THE Marcos administration is eyeing an estimated P10 billion expected excess collection from the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF) this year to expand the country's irrigation capacity and subsidize farm inputs to cut production cost and increase farmer's income.

This is according to Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez, adding that the House of Representatives, would move to allocate an additional P40 billion funding for irrigation projects under the 2024 national budget.

The main purpose is to support the mission of **President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.** to increase agricultural production.

"Nakikita ponatin, mukhang magkakaroon po tayo ng excess collections sa RCEF kaya sabing ating mahal na Pangulo



dapat itong 10 billion (pesos) na excess collections, ipagamit natin dito sa ating mga magsasaka," Speaker Romualdez said in his message during the presentation of solar-powered irrigation projects by the National Irrigation at the NIA Region 3 Office in San Rafael, Bulacan.

"At yung hinihingi lang naman sana kaya itong parang

namumuhunan ang ating Presidente dito sa mga magsasaka para pagdating ng panahon na maaani itong mga palay, siguro, ipasa na lang 'yung savings nito sa mamamayan para bumabata naman yung presyo ng ating bigas," he added.

He said the President's gesture manifests the Chief Executives' firm resolve to boost

agricultural production, particularly of rice, to ensure a stable supply of food for every Filipino family at affordable prices, and at the same time help improve the lives of our farmers.

Part of this effort is the President's dream to eventually bring down the price of rice to P20 per kilo, according to Romualdez.

Speaker Romualdez also lauded the solar-powered irrigation project of the agency in Bulacan province.

Accompanying the Speaker were Appropriations Committee chair Zaldy Co, Deputy Majority Leader for Communications Erwin Tulfo, ACT-CIS Party-list Rep. Edvic Yap, and Bulacan 3rd District Rep. Lorna Silverio.

The Speaker was welcomed by Bulacan Vice Gov. Alex Castro, San Rafael Mayor Mark Violago, along with NIA Acting Administrator Eduardo Guillen.



PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. leads the simultaneous national launch of the Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair in Nabua, Camarines Sur on Saturday.

BAGONG PILIPINAS

PBBM leads simultaneous launching of BPSF, PH's largest service caravan in 4 provinces to serve underprivileged Filipinos

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Saturday led the simultaneous launching of the Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair (BPSF), the country's biggest service caravan aimed at providing major government services to underprivileged Filipinos in various communities across the country.

"Ang programang ito ay isa lamang sa mga unang hakbangin ng pamahalaan upang magkaroon ng bagong pag-asa at bagong simula ang mga Pilipino," President Marcos said during the launching in Nabua, Camarines Sur.

"Magkakahiwalay man ang ating mga isla, pinagbubuklod-buklod naman tayo ng isang diwa at isang pangarap: isang Bagong Pilipinas para sa Bagong Pilipino."

The caravan, simultaneously launched in Laoag, Ilocos Norte for Luzon; Tolosa town in Leyte for Visayas; and in the Municipality of Monkayo, Davao de Oro for Mindanao, provides the people with medical, financial, and educational assistance.

Presidential son and Ilocos Norte Rep. Ferdinand Alexander "Sandro" Araneta Marcos III led the BPSF caravan for Luzon held at the Mariano Marcos University campus in Laoag City while Speaker Martin Romualdez led the Visayas contingent at the Visayas State University campus in Tolosa, Leyte.

Special Assistant to the President Anton Lagdameo led the BPSF held in Poblacion Monkayo, Davao de Oro.

The event featured the flagship government program "Kadiwa ng Pangulo," Passport on Wheels, Driver's License registration/assis-

tance, National ID, Pag-IBIG Fund, National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and police clearance applications.

Aside from the Serbisyo Fair, the President extended assistance to Camarines Sur farmers. The Department of Agriculture (DA), Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA), PHILMEC, and National Dairy Authority distributed tractors, harvester, hauling truck and other farm machineries and equipment.

For the Bicolano fisherfolk, the Bureau of Fishery and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) distributed fish cage packages and motorized bancas.

The DOH, for its part, provided wheelchairs to disabled senior citizens and those suffering from various illnesses.

Through Memorandum Circular No. 24 (s. 2023), the government officially launched "Bagong Pilipinas" as the overarching theme of the administration's brand of governance and leadership.

Utilizing almost P1-billion fund, BPSF is a convergence of major government services aimed at reaching underprivileged Filipinos in various communities across the country.

The campaign, characterized by institutional unity, calls for a deep and fundamental transformation and at the same time fosters the government's commitment towards the attainment of comprehensive policy reforms and economic recovery.

The Serbisyo Fair aims to promote the Bagong Pilipinas campaign by bringing government services to the people and raise awareness on the various programs and projects of the government.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Improving lives of those in agri sector neverending task – Marcos

THE government will continue to find ways to improve the quality of life of farmers as well as increase the productivity levels of the agriculture sector, **President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.** reiterated on Friday.

In his message during the Ceremonial Distribution of Rice and Various Assistance in General Trias, Cavite, President Marcos said that the Department of Agriculture (DA) is preparing for plans to capacitate the

farmer groups on rice processing on top of the efforts to run after illegal hoarders and smuggler of agricultural products.

President Marcos is also the concurrent Secretary of the DA.

"Hindi natin titigilan ang pagpagandang agricultural sector, ang pagpagandang ating ani, ng cost of production, ng ating production levels," Marcos said.

"Lahat po'y anakailang natin gawin, pati na ang mga pagtu-

long sa mga cooperatives, sa mga association tungkol sa processing para sila na ang mag-process para pagbenta nila, hindi sila nagbebenta ng palay, nagbebenta sila bigas na para mas malaki ang kikitain nila," he added.

The DA will also be distributing bio-fertilizers to farmer cooperatives and associations in lieu of the more expensive urea fertilizers, according to President Marcos. **PCO**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PBBM BAGONG PILIPINAS SERBISYO FAIR NILARGA

Pinangunahan ni Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. nitong Sabado, Setyembre 23, ang sabay-sabay na paglulunsad ng Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair (BPSF).

Ito ang pinakamalaking service caravan sa bansa na naglalayong magbigay ng mga pangunahing serbisyo ng gobyerno sa mga mahihirap na Pilipino sa iba't ibang komunidad sa buong Pilipinas.

"Ang programang ito ay isa lamang sa mga unang hakbang ng pamahalaan upang magkaroon ng bagong pag-asa at bagong simula ang mga Pilipino," pahayag ni Pangulong Marcos sa pagbubukas ng caravan sa Nabua, Camarines Sur. "Magkakahiwalay man ang ating mga isla, pinagbubuklod-buklod naman tayo ng isang diwa at isang pangarap: isang Bagong Pilipinas para sa Bagong Pilipino."

Sabay-sabay na inilunsad ang caravan sa Laoag, Ilocos Norte para sa Luzon; bayan ng Tolosa sa Leyte para sa Visayas; at sa Monkayo, Davao de Oro para sa Mindanao,

ay nagbibigay sa mga tao ng tulong medikal, pinansyal, at edukasyon.

Pinangunahan ni presidential son at Ilocos Norte Rep. Ferdinand Alexander "Sandro" Araneta Marcos III ang BPSF caravan for Luzon na ginanap sa Mariano Marcos University campus sa Laoag City habang pinangunahan ni Speaker Martin Romualdez ang Visayas contingent sa Visayas State University campus sa Tolosa, Leyte.

Pinangunahan ni Special Assistant to the President Anton Lagdameo ang BPSF na ginanap sa Poblacion Monkayo, Davao de Oro.

Itinampok sa event ang flagship government program na "Kadiwa ng Pangulo," Passport on Wheels, Driver's License registration/assistance, National ID, Pag-IBIG Fund, National Bureau of Investigation at police clearance applications.

Bukod sa Serbisyo Fair, nagpaabot ng tulong ang pangulo sa mga magsasaka ng Camarines Sur. Ang Department of Agriculture, Philippine Coconut Authority, Philippine Center

for Postharvest Development and Mechanization, at National Dairy Authority ay namahagi ng mga tractor, harvester, hauling truck at iba pang makinarya at kagamitan sa sakahan.

Para sa mga mangingisdang Bicolano, namahagi ang Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources ng mga pakete ng fish cage at mga motorized banca.

Namigay naman ang Department of Health ng wheelchair sa mga may kapansanan na senior citizen at mga dumaranas ng iba't ibang karamdaman.

Sa pamamagitan ng Memorandum Circular No. 24 (s. 2023), opisyal na inilunsad ng pamahalaan ang "Bagong Pilipinas" bilang pangkalahatang tema ng tatak ng pamamahala at pamumuno ng administrasyon. Gumagamit ng halos P1 bilyong pondo, ang BPSF ay pagsasama-sama ng mga pangunahing serbisyo ng gobyerno na naglalayong maabot ang mga mahihirap na Pilipino sa iba't ibang komunidad sa buong bansa.

Date: SEPT. 24, 2023 Page: 2



LIBRARY
 DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair binuksan ni PBBM

Pinangunahan ni Pangulong Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. nitong Sabado ang sabay-sabay na paglulunsad ng Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair (BPSF), ang pinakamalaking service caravan sa bansa na naglalayong magbigay ng mga pangunahing serbisyo ng gobyerno sa mga mahihirap na Pilipino sa iba't ibang komunidad sa buong bansa.

"Ang programang ito ay isa lamang sa mga unang hakbang ng pamahalaan

upang magkaroon ng bagong pag-asa at bagong simula ang mga Pilipino," pahayag ni Pangulong Marcos sa pagbubukas nito sa Nabua, Camarines Sur. "Magkakahiwalay man ang ating mga isla, pinagbubuklod-buklod naman tayo ng isang diwa at isang pangarap: isang Bagong Pilipinas para sa Bagong Pilipino," sabi ng Pangulo.

Ang caravan na sabay-sabay na inilunsad sa Laoag, Ilocos Norte para sa Luzon; bayan ng Tolosa sa

Leyte para sa Visayas; at sa Munisipyo ng Monkayo, Davao de Oro para sa Mindanao, ay nagbibigay sa mga tao ng tulong medikal, pinansyal, at edukasyon.

Pinangunahan ni Presidential son at Ilocos Norte Rep. Ferdinand Alexander "Sandro" Araneta Marcos III ang BPSF caravan for Luzon na ginanap sa Mariano Marcos University campus sa Laoag City habang pinangunahan ni Speaker Martin Romualdez ang Visayas contingent sa

Visayas State University campus sa Tolosa, Leyte.

Si Special Assistant to the President Anton Lagdameo ang nanguna sa BPSF na ginanap sa Poblacion Monkayo, Davao de Oro.

Itinampok sa event ang flagship government program na "Kadiwa ng Pangulo," Passport on Wheels, Driver's License registration/assistance, National ID, Pag-IBIG Fund, NB) at police clearance applications.

Nagpaabot din ng tu-

long ang Pangulo sa mga magsasaka ng Camarines Sur. Ang Department of Agriculture (DA), Philippine Coconut Authority, PHILMEC, at National Dairy Authority ay namahagi ng mga tractors, harvester, hauling truck at iba pang makinarya at kagamitan sa sakahan.

Para sa mga mangingisdang Bicolano, namahagi ang Bureau of Fishery and Aquatic Resources ng fish cage at mga motorized na banca.

Ang DOH ay nagbigay ng wheelchair sa mga may kapansanan na senior citizens at mga dumaranas ng iba't ibang karamdaman.

Gumagamit ng halos P1 bilyong pondo, ang BPSF ay isang convergence ng mga pangunahing serbisyo ng gobyerno na naglalayong maabot ang mga mahihirap na Pilipino sa iba't ibang komunidad sa buong bansa. (Gemma Garcia/Jorge Halare)



WALANG FISHING BAN – PBBM

NILINAW ni Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. nitong Sabado na ang kanyang pahayag tungkol sa pagkabahala niya sa overfishing ay hindi nangangahulugan na ipatutupad niya ang fishing ban sa Pilipinas.

Sa interview ng mga reporter sa Camarines Sur, sinabi ni Marcos Jr. na hangarin lamang niya na huwag pakialaman ang breeding ground ng mga isda upang makapagparami ang mga ito.

“Hindi maganda ang pagka-

paliwanag ko. Hindi fishing ban ang pinag-usapan ko. Ang sinasabi ko, kung saan ‘yong breeding area ng isda, huwag tayong mangingisda doon para dumami ang isda,” paliwanag ng pangulo. “Pero walang fishing ban... padadamihin natin ang isda,” dugtong pa niya.

Sinabi ni Marcos na nakarating sa kanyang impormasyon na maraming mangingisda ang kaunti lamang ang nahuhuli kaya nasabi niya na kailangang mapangalagaan ang breeding

ground ng mga isda upang maparami ang mga ito.

“Alagaan natin nang mabuti, huwag tayong papasok doon para makarami ng huli ng ating mga mangingisda,” ani Marcos Jr.

Inihayag naman ng Presidential Communications Office na pinaplano ng Marcos administration na magtayo ng maraming cold storage facilities dahil 30% ng mga nahuling isda ay nabibilasa o nabubulok dahil sa kawalan ng ganitong pasilidad.



SEPT. 24, 2023

PAGE: 3

House to grant NIA request for P40-B additional budget

By SHEILA CRISOSTOMO

The House of Representatives will grant the request of the **National Irrigation Authority (NIA)** for additional funding amounting to P40 billion to finance its irrigation projects, Speaker Martin Romualdez said yesterday.

Citing the "crucial" role of irrigation in boosting agricultural productivity, he noted that NIA has formally asked the chamber to restore some P90 billion slashed from the agency's proposed 2024 budget.

"They are asking for P100 billion but what we can give them is P40 billion so there will likely be a realignment of funds," he added.

NIA acting administrator Eddie Guillen made the request, citing data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on the early arrival and possible intensification of the El Niño phenomenon.

Guillen also underscored that they needed the funding to ensure food security.

NIA had proposed a budget of P132 billion next year but the Department of Budget and Management only granted P41.2 billion.

The agency intends to use the slashed budget to finance projects such as solar pumps and engine-driven pumps, among others.

SUC funding

Meanwhile, Makabayan bloc partylist representatives Raoul Manuel of Kabataan, Arlene Brosas of Gabriela and France Castro of ACT Teachers Partylist filed House Resolution 1325 asking the House committee on appropriations to reconsider the total allocated budget for state universities and colleges (SUCs) in the proposed funding in 2024.

The measure stated that

in the proposed national budget for 2024, SUCs were given P100.88 billion, which is lower by P6.1 billion or 5.75 percent from this year's P107.03 billion.

"Thirty of the 118 SUCs are set to incur cuts in their overall budget, wherein 10 SUCs have cuts to their personnel services, 39 SUCs have cuts to their operating budgets and 36 SUCs have cuts to their capital outlay," it reads.

The resolution cited the University of the Philippines System as among the SUCs with budget decrease from this year's allocation of P24.26 billion to the proposed P21.29 billion next year; Mindanao State University from P6.3 billion to P4.10 billion and Mariano Marcos State University from P2.51 billion to P 974.72 million.

It underscored that 2.1 million students in SUCs will be the ones to suffer from the decreased funding.

"Despite the passage of the Universal Access to Quality Tertiary Education Law, the Department of Budget and Management expects the country's 118 SUCs to earn a total of P47,948,362,000 in combined internal income, including fees collected from students. P18,830,086,000 will be sourced from tuition collection while P7,186,759,000 will be from other income collected from students," the measure stated.

The resolution indicated that "what is needed is an overhaul of the current system of education: a repeal of all existing education policies related to labor export, deregulation and commercialization, and establishment of a nationalist, scientific and mass-oriented system of education."



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

DA updates MAV policy

By **DANESSA RIVERA**

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is updating its rules on the implementation of the country's minimum access volume (MAV) commitments.

In a special order, the DA formed a technical working group (TWG) to amend Administrative Order 1 issued in 1998 and

supplemented by AO 52 promulgated in 2000.

The TWG is tasked to identify the key issues and gaps in the implementation of the policies and prepare and provide technical inputs and comments to the working draft issuance.

It is also solicit the inputs and comments of relevant stakeholders through public consultations

for consideration in the finalization of the draft issuance.

The TWG is also finalizing the draft amendments, including the conduct of legal review, and endorse a new administrative circular to the DA undersecretary for policy, planning and regulations and senior undersecretary for approval.

The group is chaired by DA assistant secretary for policy research

and development Noel Padre and DA assistant secretary for regulations Paz Benavidez II as vice chair.

The MAV mechanism refers to the volume of a specific agricultural product allowed to be imported with a lower tariff as part of a country's commitment to the World Trade Organization (WTO) to facilitate trade between countries.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

SEPT. 24, 2023
PAGE: B3

Bad eggs

At a recent international mining conference, Philex Mining chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan emphasized that an industry should not be judged based on its worst members.

He said that if countries like South Africa, Australia, Indonesia and China can operate and manage their mining businesses well and can conduct their mining operations responsibly and sustainably, then so can the Philippines.

Pangilinan noted that the local mining industry has to further level up when it comes to sustainability practices and standards, adding that the industry should be judged based on how the sector as a whole practices mining responsibly.

HIDDEN AGENDA



MARY ANN
LL. REYES

He emphasized that the mistakes of a few should not lead to the notion that the whole is wrong.

He cited the case of Philex which, on its own back in 2012, voluntarily stopped operations and addressed the tailings pond leak problem, and promptly paid the P1-billion fine imposed by government for the accident caused by unprecedented rain volume on its mining area.

Pangilinan also called on industry players to help improve the state of mining in the Philippines by addressing, among others, health-related and safety concerns, exploitation of women and child workers, as well as the lack of clarity of plans and actionable post-mining rehabilitation which can restore mine sites to their original natural state.

He likewise recommended that the mining benefits between host LGUs and the national government should be shared more equitably and the latter must ensure the timely remittance of taxes due to the LGUs.

To make the industry sustainable, Pangilinan further suggested the separation of the mining regulatory and promotion functions of the DENR to address the problem of conflicting goals of the department. He said that the Environmental Management Bureau, which enforces environmental laws on mining, should be spun off into a separate and independent body just like the US Environmental Protection Agency. The Mines and Geosciences Bureau, which is charged with the promotion, development, and supervision of mining, can

remain with the DENR.

For his part, Chamber of Mines of the Philippines president Mike Toledo explained that mining has become more than just an enterprise that deals with rocks and dirt, noting that global trends and the positive changes being effected by policy makers and industry players aimed at ensuring sustainability are gradually transforming mining as an area of growth, responsibility, and a future that gleams with possibility.

Indeed, there are bad eggs in every industry, but it is not fair to call the entire basket as being rotten.

Take the case of the quarrying industry, which involves the extraction of sand, gravel, and other quarry resources found on or underneath the surface of private or public land which also governed by the Philippine Mining Act and under the regulation and supervision of the DENR.

A few years' back, the **National Irrigation Administration (NIA)** reported that its infrastructure projects are being threatened by sand and gravel quarry sites which operate too close to irrigation facilities and structures. The foundations of dams are being threatened due to severe erosion caused by quarrying operations.

Meanwhile, a recent study on illegal extraction and trade of black sand in Ilocos Sur revealed that this has caused adverse effects like transformation of riverbeds into large and deep pits, displacement of residents due to threats of soil erosion and flooding, gradual loss of limited fertile lands for agricultural activities, and loss of fisheries productivity and coastal ecosystem.

A study by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) showed that the most important products of quarrying in the country are rock aggregates, namely sand and gravel, with their share of total mineral output increasing through the years.

It said that unlike in mining where operations are generally large scale and degradation impacts are obvious, operations in quarrying are relatively small-scale and the effects are less evident. But while quarrying is considered by many as a secondary component of the entire mining industry, illegal quarrying activities are also giving the Philippine mining industry a bad image.

There are two types of quarrying operations – mountain quarrying and river quarrying. However, PIDS noted that both have potentially significant negative environmental impacts.

In Palawan, it is estimated that illegal operators comprise one-third in terms of number and two-thirds in terms of production of total quarrying in the province.

Just recently, **STAR** columnist Alex Magno reported that

members of Task Force Sagip Kalikasan have filed a complaint before the Office of the Ombudsman against San Fernando, Camarines Sur Mayor Fermin Mabulo together with five barangay chairman for alleged illegal mountain quarrying activities due to the absence of authority from the DENR or from the provincial government.

It is estimated that Mayor Mabulo and his group have evaded paying local taxes amounting to P54 million.

Despite an order issued by the DENR regional director back in 2021 to cease quarrying operations in the San Fernando barangays, it was claimed that the mayor disregarded the order. In addition, the complainants are saying that equipment belonging to the local government have been used for the illegal quarrying activities.

The same report revealed that the complainants have asked the Ombudsman to immediately suspend Mabulo et al. to halt destructive quarrying activities in the area and clear the way for an exhaustive investigation into allegations of graft.

The complainants have accused Mabulo and company of violating the provision on theft of minerals under RA 7942 or the Philippine Mining Act, as well as violation of anti-graft and penal laws for the use of government vehicles for the illegal quarrying activities.

These illegal activities reportedly have been raised and discussed in the sessions of the San Fernando Sangguniang Bayan since 2021 but nothing has happened. It is claimed that 12 of the 14 quarrying sites in the town were illegally operated.

Back in 2017, the Office of the Ombudsman announced that it ordered the dismissal from service of two high-ranking officials from the Bulacan environment and natural resources offices in connection with illegal mining activities in the province.

In 2011, the Ombudsman filed graft charges before the Sandiganbayan against then Mexico, Pampanga Mayor Teddy Tumang also due to illegal quarry activities.

In Cebu City, Mayor Michael Rama called for a stop to illegal quarrying as residents in mountain barangays have reported more and more quarrying activities going on, the effects of which are especially felt during heavy rains.

What is needed is vigilance on the part of the citizens in reporting illegal mining and quarrying activities, local government officials who will not use their authority to exploit the environment, and a national government that will protect the environment against illegal miners of natural resources.

For comments, e-mail at mareyes@philstarmedia.com



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Crack down on rice smugglers, gov't urged

FARMERS urged the national government to catch the smugglers and file charges against them.

This is one way to stop smuggling and hoarding of agricultural products in the country, the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) said in a statement.

"The government should muster enough political will and sincerity to genuinely address the rampant smuggling of agri-

cultural products, particularly rice, sugar, and vegetables, and bring to justice the masterminds and ringleaders of smuggling syndicates in the country," the KMP said in a statement.

"Smuggling is an organized crime. Smugglers, hoarders, and unscrupulous traders could be related. We believe that the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Bureau of Customs (BOC) knows who are behind

the large-scale smuggling operations but they not acting decisively to catch the criminals," the group added.

The KMP also said it is about time to identify those behind the illegal activities and put them behind bars.

This month, the BOC seized more than 42,000 sacks of rice worth P44 million from a warehouse in Zamboanga City, another 36,086 sacks of imported

rice from Vietnam, Thailand, and Myanmar worth P90.2 million from a warehouse in Tondo, Manila, and some P40-million worth of imported rice from Vietnam, Thailand, and China were seized in Las Pinas City.

The smuggled rice seized in Zamboanga was forfeited and turned over to the DSWD and was part of the smuggled rice distributed by Marcos Jr to 4Ps beneficiaries. *Jester Manalastas*



Expanded DA Young Farmers Challenge to Launch soon

ON September 28, 2023, the Department of Agriculture (DA), through the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS) in collaboration with the office of Senator Imee R. Marcos and the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), will launch the Young Farmers Challenge (YFC) Program. The event will be graced by Senator Imee R. Marcos as the principal sponsor of the program.

The DA's YFC Program, now on its third year, has provided a total of P149.25 million start capital funds for 2,955 young farmers to implement their own agribusiness ventures.

Aside from the capital grants, the DA-AMAS also provides various Business Development Services to ensure that the young ones will continue and upscale their respective operations through coaching and mentoring, local and international product expositions, and assistance with business registrations, among others.

For this year, the YFC program has two (2) new components: the YFC Upscale and the YFC Intercollegiate Competition. This is open to all previous YFC awardees aspiring to scale-up their current agribusiness operations by investing in new technologies including product development, improving marketing platforms, and generating employment, among others.

The YFC Upscale is a head-to-head business pitch competition with a financial grant of P300,000 for each regional winner and P500,000 for each national winner.

This year, the DA will also engage students taking up agriculture and related courses in the State Universities and Colleges (SUCs) for the YFC Intercollegiate Competition component, which will be a Business Model Canvas-based Competition.

The program will help students transform their ideas into profitable agribusiness ventures by training them to improve their skills and knowl-

edge as agripreneurs and professional farmer business owners.

The YFC Regional Intercollegiate Competition targets SUCs that are accredited by the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) and members of the Philippine Association of State Universities and Colleges (PASUC). This is open to all sophomore students who have business ideas with viability potential. Each winning SUC enterprise per region will be awarded with a financial grant of P150,000 as start-up capital.

For 2023, the DA YFC Program-Start Up targets a total of 546 new breed of young farmers to take part in ensuring the country's food security.

To ensure the efficient and effective program implementation, the DA also partnered with different government agencies including the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), among others.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Tougher penalties vs agri-smuggling sought

SPONSORS of the bill who seek to amend the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act of 1966 expect stiffer punishment for the offenders to ensure that the economic security of farmers, fisherfolk and the public is safeguarded.

On Friday night, the consolidated version of House Bill 9284 was brought to the floor on second reading by Committee on Agriculture and Food Chairman and Quezon 1st District Rep. Wilfrido Mark Enverga.

In his sponsorship speech, Enverga said that despite numerous cases filed under Republic Act 10845 or the "Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act," no one has been convicted yet since its enactment in 1966.

"[This] shows that there is a need to further strengthen the existing law by declaring other acts such as hoarding, profiteering, cartelizing and other acts

of market abuse as economic sabotage. These acts and the corresponding penalties are clearly defined in the proposed law," Enverga said.

The bill defines economic sabotage as persons who engage in large-scale smuggling of imported commodities, large scale hoarding, profiteering, and cartelizing of both imported and domestically-produced commodities, which would institute corresponding punishments.

It would also pursue heavier penalties on those who engage in illicit acts, such as 20 years to life imprisonment for public officials, individuals, cooperatives, associations, corporations and nongovernment organizations who are directly involved, or whose actions allow or facilitate, the smuggling, hoarding, profiteering, and cartelizing of agro-fishery commodities and tobacco.

The fines on those found guilty will also be increased, from two times the fair value to six times the fair market value of the commodities subjected to illicit activities, as well as increasing the accountability of public officials and employees who are into illicit activities.

Further, the bill creates the Anti-Agro Fishery Commodities and Tobacco Economic Sabotage Council, the Anti-Agro Fishery Commodities and Tobacco Economic Sabotage Task Force, and a Congressional Oversight Committee that would evaluate the implementation of the law.

Amend law now

Nueva Ecija 1st District Rep. Mikaela Angela Suansing, the committee's vice chairman and co-sponsor of the measure, said that it is "high time"

to amend the previous law in light of recent reports of widespread and large-scale smuggling and alarming levels of hoarding and other illicit activities involving agricultural and tobacco products.

"The law can finally prosecute the acts of unscrupulous entities that presently evade criminal punishment because of lapses in the current law, at the expense of the livelihoods of our Filipino farmers and fisher folk," Suansing added.

The bill is one of the priority measures set by the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council or Ledac and by Speaker Ferdinand Martin Romualdez.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. last Wednesday certified the counterpart Senate Bill 2432 as urgent.

RED MENDOZA



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BOC kinakalkal Chinese mafia sa bigas smuggling

Nakatanggap umano ng impormasyon ang Bureau of Customs (BOC) na may Chinese mafia sa likod ng bigas smuggling sa bansa.

Inihayag ito ni BuCor Director Vernie Enciso sa isang news forum na ginanap sa Quezon City nitong Sabado, Setyembre 23.

Ayon kay Enciso, kanila nang iniimbestigahan ang mga natanggap na report ukol sa sindikatong nag-o-operate umano sa pagpupuslit ng bigas.

"Either nasa side ng financing, nasa side ng distribution or nasa side ng, there are other, maraming levels kung nasaan sila present dito sa agricultural smuggling. Yan po ang isa sa mga tinitignan ng Bureau of Customs," paliwanag ni Enciso.

Samantala, sinabi ng BOC na nagpapatuloy ang kanilang pagsalakay sa mga kahina-hinalang bodega ng bigas sa bansa.

Mula Agosto hanggang ngayong Setyembre umano umabot na sa 236,571 sako ng puslit na bigas ang kanilang nasamsam mula sa apat na bodega sa Bulacan; 36,000 sako sa Tondo, Maynila; at 20,000 sako sa Las Piñas at Bacoor, Cavite.

Sabi ni Enciso, hindi tugma ang mga ipinakitang dokumento at aktuwal na importasyon sa mga sinalakay na bodega ng bigas.

Subalit aminado naman BOC chief of staff Atty. Marlon Agaceta na mahaba pa ang proseso para mapatunayan kung pinalusot ang mga nasamsam na bigas sa pantalan.

Masusing imbestigasyon ginagawa umano ng mga abogado ng BOC sa mga ganitong kaso bago magsampa ng pormal na reklamo upang hindi naman masayang ang pagsasampa ng kaso. **(Dolly Cabreza)**