

A. SEC. PBBM QUOTED

THE MANILA TIMES

We have enough rice – Marcos

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Marcos leads launch of gov't services caravan

BUSINESS WORLD

PBBM's defining moment

MANILA BULLETIN

Marcos orders price cap relief for sari-sari store owners

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

PHL signs MOU on sustainable agribusiness, climate change with Asean members

BUSINESS MIRROR

Breeding zones off-limits to fisheries – Marcos

ABANTE

Bigas bagsak presyo sa anihan

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL

Marcos delivered strong message to hoarders, smugglers- DSWD

Gov'T expects drop in rice prices as harvest season starts

Rice price cap-affected sari-sari store owners to get cash aid

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON

Presyo ng bigas bababa na ngayong anihan - PBBM

B. DA FAMILY

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

China sets up floating barrier in Panatag Shoal

Retailers urge gov't: Lift rice price caps

THE MANILA TIMES

RCEP loan releases hit P2.2B

China installs barrier in Bajo de Masinloc

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Senators assail China floating barriers in WPS

BUSINESS WORLD

LanBank disburses P2.2B in loans to rice farmers by end- July

Rice inventory declines in early June; Corn stocks edge up

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Landbank loans to rice farmers hit P2.2B

Chiz presses raps vs rice smugglers

BUSINESS MIRROR

PCG, BFAR score China's bid to block Bajo de Masinloc

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL

Rice sufficient but distribution a problem – PBBM

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON

China naglatag ng floating barrier sa WPS – PCG

Magsasaka bigyan ng disenteng kita - Villar

C. AGRI-RELATED STORY

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Philippines, Malaysia private sector to collaborate on agriculture and MSME...

More farmers' groups join calls to remove Diokno, Balisacan

THE MANILA TIMES

Barred from entering 'Kalburo' Shoal, Zambales fishers' catch dwindling

Imee warns 'rice smugglers'

MANILA BULLETIN

Amid soaring rice prices, a holistic approach to rice self-sufficiency in...

BUSINESS MIRROR

More groups buck proposal to slash tariffs on agri goods

ABANTE

Kaso ng mga rice smuggler, hoarder inareglo – Chiz

ABANTE TONITE

Mga sinamsam na bigas illegal ipamudmod - Escudero

D. FOREIGN STORY

BUSINESS WORLD

London cocoa posts 3% weekly loss

Mexico researchers show progress on drive to replace US corn imports

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

Soy up; wheat, corn firm

BUSINESS MIRROR

'Climate crises hinders efforts to eradicate hunger and poverty'

India rice export ban is fueling risk of social unrest, UN says



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

We have enough rice – Marcos

BY KRISTINA MARALIT

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. gave assurances that the country has ample rice supply but admitted that the gaps in distribution disrupt market availability and supply and therefore must be resolved by the government.

"There are still many things lacking when it comes to distribution," he said during a rice distribution event he spearheaded in Iriga City over the weekend. "We have enough rice, it's just



■ President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during the rice distribution for poor families and Indigenous Peoples in Camarines Sur. PHOTO BY RENE H. DILAN

that the supply is not distributed correctly. Supply is not a problem here in the Philippines." The President added that rice production increased this year but the

government has to improve the system.

"We need to fix the system from research and development to planting, processing, distribution,

marketing, up to retail," he said.

Marcos said the government has started implementing reforms whose effects may soon be felt by the public.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE



NEWS

Marcos leads launch of services caravan

Malacañang on Sunday said a caravan would soon be launched in all provinces in the country to provide quicker delivery of government services to the people. The Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair (BPSF) caravan will give "less fortunate Filipinos" easier access to these services under such flagship projects as the Kadiwa ng Pangulo, the Palace said. **President Marcos** on Saturday led the launching of the BPSF in Camarines Sur. —STORY BY JEROME ANING

A4

Marcos leads launch of gov't services caravan

By Jerome Aning
@JeromeAningINQ

Malacañang on Sunday said a "caravan" will soon be launched in all 82 provinces in the country to provide Filipinos with easier access to government services.

In a statement, the Palace said the "Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair" (BPSF) caravan, which President Marcos launched in Camarines Sur on Saturday, aims to provide to "less fortunate Filipinos" major government services under such flagship projects as the Kadiwa ng Pangulo, Passport-on-Wheels and other assistance and outreach programs.

In Nabua, Camarines Sur, Mr. Marcos led the distribution of rice and cash aid to indigents and boats to the town's fisherfolk.

The BPSF was also simultaneously launched in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, in ceremonies led by Rep. Ferdinand Alexander

Marcos III; in Tolosa, Leyte, by Speaker Martin Romualdez; and in Monkayo, Davao de Oro, by Special Assistant to the President Anton Lagdameo.

Benefits

In his speech, Mr. Marcos said the BPSF was only one of the first initiatives of his administration to provide Filipinos with government services in the comfort of their provinces.

Romualdez, on the other hand, was quoted in the Palace statement as saying that "The 'Serbisyo Fair' truly breathed life into the aspirations of Mr. Marcos to bring many government programs within the reach of people who may not have the means to avail of these benefits."

The BPSF national secretariat comprises the Office of the President, the Office of the Speaker, the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) and

the House of Representatives.

Record-high participation

According to the PCO, organizers had decided to stretch some of the programs from the original two-day event as it attracted a record high of 322,689 portal-registered Filipinos as of 10:30 a.m. on Sunday.

Organizers estimated that the service caravan would attract more than 400,000 participants.

As of Sunday morning, 87,158 participants were recorded in Laoag, Ilocos Norte; 103,647 in Nabua, Camarines Sur; 57,345 in Tolosa, Leyte; and, 74,539 in Monkayo, Davao de Oro.

The BPSF offers social, livelihood, education and regulatory assistance services from various agencies—such as enrollment in Tupad (Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers), legal counseling, distribution of farm inputs and machinery, Tulong Dunong

Program, Tesda scholarships and program enrollment, financial assistance programs, Kadiwa Stores, SB Corp. services for MSMEs, educational assistance, LTO driver's license renewal, DFA passport application, NBI clearance application, police clearance application, LTOPF renewal/application, PSA birth certificate application, Pag-Ibig membership and housing loan, SSS membership application, GSIS UMID application, Postal ID application, National ID application, PhilHealth consultation, Public service training, PRC renewal, PAO free legal services, and PhilHealth registration.

Meanwhile, the President has directed the Department of Social Welfare and Development to start distributing today cash assistance to *sari-sari* store owners affected by the price ceilings on rice, Malacañang said on Sunday. —WITH A REPORT FROM MARLON RAMOS INQ



President Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. may be facing a defining moment in his presidency: the fight against inflation. Whether he succeeds or fails in the fight against inflation will set the tone for the rest of his term, determine his legacy, and build or destroy the political capital he needs to achieve the rest of his objectives.

Inflation is the number one concern among Filipinos, repeated surveys reveal. It is mostly driven by food inflation, a “gut” issue if ever there is one. It determines whether Filipinos go hungry and shapes how they view the world.

On a macro-level, however, persistently high inflation could lead to a “doom loop”: high inflation leads to high interest rates, resulting in lower growth, lower government revenues, and less money for government spending, leading to lower growth.

We are already seeing the effects of high inflation and high interest rates: estimated GDP growth this year is expected to be around 5.5% per annum (pa), lower than the 6-7% pa the government is projecting for the next five years. This will likely lead to lower tax revenues, higher deficits, and bigger borrowings.

So far, the government is fall-

PBBM’s defining moment



INTROSPECTIVE CALIXTO V. CHIKIAMCO

To fight inflation, the government has chosen to conduct political theater rather than addressing fundamentals. The rice price cap will just result in inedible rice being offered by retailers and a lower buying price for farmers. The public will also see through the “moro-moro” of demonizing so-called hoarders and smugglers as the reason for the high rice prices.

ing short in the fight against inflation. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) expects inflation to average between 5-6% pa this year, well above its target range of 2-4%. It has indicated that it's prepared to increase interest rates some more if necessary and this will lead to slower growth.

To fight inflation, the government has chosen to conduct political theater rather than addressing fundamentals. The rice price cap will just result in inedible rice being offered by retailers and a lower buying price for farmers. The public will also see through the “moro-moro” of demonizing so-called hoarders and smugglers as the reason for the high rice prices. The government has failed to put a single “hoarder” to jail.

BusinessWorld™

Date: SEPT. 25, 2023 Page: 4/57



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

There is one effective way to fight food inflation, but the administration has chosen not to do it: liberalize food importation, i.e., reduce the tariff on rice and abolish quantitative restrictions on corn, chicken, pork, vegetables, sugar, and fish.

The present system, wherein quantitative restrictions are imposed on these agricultural commodities and high tariffs are imposed whether in-quota and out-quota, just benefits the Department of Agriculture (DA) insiders and the syndicates able to manipulate supply due to these restrictions. Since supply is constricted through these quotas and high tariffs, Filipino consumers pay high prices for food.

At the very least, corn importation should be liberalized, and

tariffs reduced to 5%. Corn is the major ingredient in pork and chicken production. It accounts for about 60% of the cost of raising hogs and poultry. The high tariffs and import restrictions on corn are the reason why our chicken prices are almost double that of Thailand. The high cost of corn also incentivizes our hog producers to resort to swill feeding, enabling the African Swine Fever to spread among the hog population and decimating local pork production.

Vietnam recently reduced its tariff on corn from a low 4% to an even lower 2%. Why shouldn't we have the same low tariffs to reduce chicken and pork prices? Vietnam has smartly decided to move up the agricultural produc-

tion chain to chicken and pork production where the value added is higher.

The present Philippine tariff on corn is 35%, although this was modified to 5% for in-quota and 15% out-quota temporarily by EO 10, issued by President Rodrigo Duterte and extended for another year by President Marcos, Jr. until the end of this year. The problem is that the MAV (Minimum Access Volume) was set at a low 217,000 MT when the country's deficit is around 3 million to 5 million metric tons. What the government should do instead is abolish the MAV and allow free importation of corn at whatever volume.

The argument against liberalization has always been that protection helps our farmers. Has

it? Decades of protection haven't benefited our corn farmers, who remain one of the poorest groups in the country, together with fishermen and coconut farmers. Their average farm size is only half a hectare (yes, 5,000 square meters), which is just too small for increasing production commercially. No amount of protection will change this uneconomic production structure.

I'm also mystified as to why President Bongbong Marcos listens to these noisy so-called farmer leaders calling for more protection when they are clearly not the average Filipino farmer, and why he has to resort to political theater in trying to resolve inflation and the food crisis. He isn't running for re-election un-

less he's governing with a different agenda in mind.

He should learn instead from former President Duterte, who listened to his economic managers and pushed through the Rice Tariffication Law despite opposition from these noisy farmer leaders and leftist organizations. The result was stable rice prices for a significant period. The stable rice prices were a contributing factor to the high popularity rating enjoyed by former President Duterte.

There's a possibility that the situation will get worse before it gets better. Oil prices have surged to \$92 per barrel due to the oil production cut announced by Saudi Arabia and Russia. Fertilizer prices and other petroleum-based inputs will surely follow. Sugar prices are surging, and local production is expected to drop with the onset of El Niño or the dry weather phenomenon. That means higher prices for everything from cookies to banana-cue.

If the DA miscalculates on its estimates of the amount of local

harvest, and reserves from imports aren't enough by the end of the year with traders being scared by the rice price cap and threats of prosecution, a full-blown rice crisis can erupt by the first quarter of next year, according to agricultural economist Dr. Fermin Adriano.

Moreover, while wheat and barley are substitutes for corn, the Ukraine war has caused the prices of wheat to gyrate since Russia ended the deal to allow Ukraine to export food. Pork and poultry producers can expect cost increases across the board.

Indeed, a perfect storm is brewing. The times call for tough decisions, not political gimmickry. How President Bongbong Marcos handles inflation and the food crisis will be the defining moment of his presidency. ■

CALIXTO V. CHIKIAMCO
is a member of the
board of IDEA (Institute
for Development and
Econometric Analysis).
totivchiki@yahoo.com





LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Marcos orders price cap relief for sari-sari store owners

Gov't to distribute cash aid Sept. 25-29

By BETHEENA UNITE

President Marcos has ordered the distribution of cash assistance to sari-sari store owners affected by the implementation of the temporary price ceiling on rice.

Malacañang said yesterday that

the President directed the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to provide cash assistance to small rice retailers affected by the implementation of the mandated price ceiling on regular and well-milled rice in the country.

According to DSWD Secretary Rex

Gatchalian, ₱15,000 cash aid will be given to the affected small rice retailers.

The DSWD is set to distribute the cash assistance to sari-sari store owners on Sept. 25 to 29.

It will work with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) which will identify the beneficiaries. ►10



Marcos orders price cap relief for sari-sari store owners 1◀

Marcos approved the implementation of a ₱41 price ceiling on regular milled rice and ₱45 price cap on well-milled rice through the issuance of Executive Order No. 39.

Based on its latest report, the DSWD said that it has already released ₱92.415 million worth of financial assistance to 6,161 out of the 8,390-target micro and small rice retailers affected by the implementation of the EO 39 nationwide.

Extend cash aid

The DTI had earlier urged the DSWD to extend its cash aid distribution to potential Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) beneficiaries such as unlisted micro rice retailers affected by the rice price cap.

The DTI ended the submission of the lists of the micro rice retailer beneficiaries on Sept. 23, while the DSWD is set to conclude its cash aid distribution on Friday, Sept. 29.

DTI Fair Trade Enforcement Bureau (FTEB) Director Philip Sawali said on Saturday at DZBB's "Konsyumer Atbp" episode that he is appealing to DSWD that through its SLP, other micro rice retailers who were not included in the list will still be considered and provided with the ₱15,000-cash assistance, "as long as they meet the requirements" of the said program.

"This is my appeal to those who were not included, for whatever reason, that the DSWD can continue under the SLP (program) even in different modality, they can still be considered, I think given (that) the criteria and all requirements set by the SLP (program) of the DSWD," he said.

It was Sawali who announced that DTI closed the lists of the micro rice retailer beneficiaries on Sept. 22, a week before the DSWD ends its cash aid distribution this coming Friday.

Based on the consolidated report as of Sept. 19, a total of P68.94 million worth of cash aid was released by the DSWD to its SLP beneficiaries and micro rice retailers affected by the price cap under Executive Order No. 39 (EO

39) nationwide.

Sawali also reported that based on the DTI and the Department of Agriculture's (DA) joint monitoring, the compliance among the micro and small rice retailers nationwide has improved, as of Sept. 19, at 87.5 percent from the 56.22 percent compliance rate on its first day of monitoring, on Sept. 5.

The remaining 12.5 percent were those who were still not complying with the price cap of ₱41 per kilo for regular-milled rice (RMR) and ₱45 per kilo for well-milled rice (WMR).

Meanwhile, in the National Capital Region (NCR), the compliance rate was also high at 85.71 percent as of Sept. 22.

The data was plotted by the Consumer Policy Advocacy Group (CPAG), according to Sawali.

The DTI holds the official lists of the cash aid recipients, while the DSWD manages the payout under its SLP.

Sawali also expressed gratitude to the micro rice retailers who are consistently complying with the mandated price ceiling, as well as to the DTI's agency partners like the DA, and the DSWD for their cooperation, including all other stakeholders who have been part of the distribution system.

Smuggled rice for poor families

President Marcos has ordered the DSWD to continue the distribution of seized smuggled rice to poor families in the country.

Marcos led the distribution of two batches of smuggled rice in Zamboanga Sibugay and Cavite last week.

DSWD Assistant Secretary Romel Lopez said the agency will keep distributing rice donations as long as it receives the seized smuggled rice.

"Well, depende po sa (it depends on the) supply. But then that's the thrust of the President, it's the thrust of Secretary Rex Gatchalian na hangga't mayroon pong nadu-donate sa atin, patuloy po nating ipapasa o ibabahagi din sa ating mga kababayan dahil alam din naman po natin iyong

pangangailangan ng mga poor and afflicted natin na mga kababayan (that as long as there are donations, we will continue to give them to our fellowmen because we know what the poor and afflicted need)," Lopez said in a news forum in Quezon City when asked about the sustainability of DSWD donations.

According to Lopez, the government expects the rice distribution campaign to serve as a stern warning to rice smugglers, hoarders, and profiteers for them to think twice before engaging in illegal activities, pointing out the commodity that they illegally imported may end up as DSWD donation to poor families.

The DSWD official also thanked the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and the Office of the President for providing and facilitating the transfer of smuggled rice to the DSWD for eventual distribution to the beneficiaries of Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps).

As mandated by the President, the DSWD has been carrying out rice distribution in various areas.

Smuggled rice was given to 1,200 beneficiaries in General Trias, Cavite on Sept. 22 following the distribution of 1,500 sacks of rice to families in Zamboanga Sibugay on Sept. 19.

Ensuring compliance

Currently, the Fair Trade Enforcement Bureau and the DTI regional offices are monitoring, reminding, and issuing warnings to those who are not in compliance with the mandated price ceiling under EO 39 to comply already.

Sawali also said that DTI led by Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual sees no reason to draw the "sledgehammer of enforcement" as long as rice is being sold within the price cap by the local rice retailers.

The FTEB Director also stressed that the reports on violations or alleged infractions against EO 39 are closely monitored and documented from the fields which were formally forwarded to the Department of Agriculture (DA) for its appropriate actions. DA has the jurisdiction to

process formal complaints and reported violations of the Price Act.

In addition, to ensure consistent compliance among the rice retailers even upon receiving cash assistance, Sawali said that the DTI and the DA are conducting daily monitoring.

He explained that by checking the

markets, they can identify whether the rice retailers are still following the price cap after receiving the cash aid.

The recipients also sign an undertaking, stating that they are affected by the EO 39 and that they follow and will continue to follow the EO 39 price caps. (With Ma. Joselie C. Garcia)



PHL signs MOUs on sustainable agribusiness, climate change with Asean members

THE private sectors from the Philippines and eight other state members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations-Business Advisory Council (Asean-BAC) signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) in Jakarta, Indonesia for agriculture cooperation and small business development, seeking to boost Asean efforts toward economic integration.

The MOU aims to jointly conduct “studies and mentorship channels with Filipinos for potential agriculture, agriculture technology, food security, agri-preneurship business models and value chain development among small, medium, and large farmers, enterprises, and government entities.”

Separate MOUs were signed for each cooperation with Thailand, Brunei, Singapore, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Myanmar, and Indonesia through their respective Asean-BAC representatives.

The Philippines was represented by Asean-BAC Philippines Chairman Jose Ma. Concepcion 3rd, the founder of Go Negosyo.

The development of trade and investment opportunities in various agricultural commodities including rubber, rice, corn, fruits, vegetables, and other agricultural services



is expected to be explored under this joint cooperation.

All member-states also agreed to jointly

promote effective strategies in addressing climate change and ensure a sustainable agri-business environment.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Breeding zones off-limits to fishers—Marcos

By JOVEE MARIE N. DELA CRUZ

[@joveemarie](#)

THE Palace has clarified that the government will only implement a fishing restriction in the breeding zones, not a fishing ban.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said the government will not impose a fishing ban as it will affect the income of the country's small-scale fishermen.

In a media interview during the rice distribution in Iriga City, Camarines Sur last Saturday, the president said a fishing ban would not be imposed but only a fishing restriction in the breeding areas.

"My explanation is not good. I was not talking about a fishing ban. What I'm saying is, where is the breeding area of the fish? Let's not fish there so that the fish will multiply," he said.

"But there is no fishing ban. Let's increase the number of fish. Because I was talking to the fishermen earlier, they said that their catch is really decreasing."



THIS BUSINESSMIRROR file photo shows the catch of the day by fishermen of San Enrique, Negros Occidental.

The chief executive underscored the importance of protecting fish breeding grounds to ensure an abundant supply of fish in



the Philippines and to ensure that fishermen's sources of income will not be affected.

Marcos recently said there is a

need to address overfishing and boost the country's fish population and aquaculture.

The president said these measures are part of the government's plan to secure the country's fish stocks, along with other initiatives for the agriculture sector to ensure food security.

The administration is also implementing programs to put up more cold storage facilities to prevent spoilage, the president said, noting that up to 30 percent of the fish catch is degraded or damaged.

Last June, Marcos said he wants to create Strategic Agriculture and Fisheries Development Zones (SAFDZ) to prevent illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing (IUUF).

"The DA [Department of Agriculture] and the BFAR [Bureau of

Fisheries and Aquatic Resources] were also directed to study the establishment of SAFDZ to provide fishery stakeholders with an area for sustainable fishing," the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said in a statement.

Aside from the SAFDZ, officials had discussed the implementation of Fisheries Administrative Order (FAO) 266, series of 2020, which requires commercial fishing vessels (CFVs) to install vessel monitoring systems.

Marcos also wants to review the licenses of CFVs that fail to comply with FAO 266, series of 2020 and for DA and the BFAR to determine the provisions of Republic Act 8550 or the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, as amended by RA 10654, which needs to be amended.

Abante

UNA SA BALITA

Date: 25 SEP 2023 Page: 3



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Abante NEGOSYO

Bigas bagsak presyo sa anihan

MARARAMDAMAN na ang pagbaba ng presyo ng bigas dahil panahon na ng anihan ng palay.

Ito ang inihayag ni Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. sa harap ng binabantayang presyo ng bigas sa mga pamilihan matapos ipatupad ang price cap nitong unang linggo ng Setyembre.

Ayon sa pangulo, inasahang magiging maayos ang supply pagkatapos ng anihan dahil mas malaki ang magiging ani ngayon

ng mga magsasaka.

Batay aniya sa report sa kanya ng Department of Agriculture, mas malaki ang produksiyon ngayong taon ng mga magsasaka.

"Sa palagay ko, pagpasok ng ani, dahil papasok na, nag-aani na tayo at pagpasok niyan, sa palagay ko makikita na natin na pababa na 'yong presyo,' anang pangulo.

Kapag nangyari aniya ito ay maari ng bawasan ang ipinatupad na price ceiling. (Aileen Tali-ping)



MARCOS DELIVERED STRONG MESSAGE TO HOARDERS, SMUGGLERS -- DSWD

THE Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) will continue to distribute rice to poor households as long as the agency receives confiscated smuggled rice seized by authorities acting on the instructions of **President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.**, a social welfare official said on Saturday.

"Well, depende po sa supply. But then that's the thrust of the President, it's the thrust of Secretary Rex Gatchalian na hangga't mayroon pong nadudonate sa atin, patuloy po nating ipapasa o ibabahagi din sa ating mga kababayan dahil alam din naman po natin iyong pangangailangan ng mga poor and afflicted natin na mga kababayan," Social Welfare Assistant Secretary Romel Lopez said in a news forum in Quezon City when asked about the sustainability of DSWD donations.

"And sa atin naman po sa DSWD, immediately ano po ay pinamamahagi din natin ito sa mga poor beneficiaries natin kasalamin natin, medyo... iyong bigas ano po, staple food ng ating mga kababayan," Lopez said.



According to Lopez, the government expects rice distribution campaign to serve as a stern warning to rice smugglers, hoarders and profiteers for them to think twice before engaging in illegal activities, pointing out the commodity that they illegally imported may end up as DSWD donation to poor families.

"Most probably kung gani-t po ang inyong gagawin, kayo po ay involved sa smug-

gling ng bigas, baka po ang ending niyan ay sa donation lamang ho. So that's why we encourage po iyong ating kababayan to do away with these illegal activities," Lopez said.

Lopez thanked the Bureau of Customs (BOC) and the Office of the President for providing and facilitating the transfer of smuggled rice to the DSWD for eventual distribution to the beneficiaries of 4Ps.

As mandated by the President, the DSWD has been carrying out rice distribution in various areas.

In General Trias, Cavite on Friday, the DSWD distributed rice to 1,200 beneficiaries, with each of them receiving 25 kilos.

The agency also conducted similar events in Zamboanga Sibugay and Zamboanga City in Mindanao.

PCO



GOV'T EXPECTS DROP IN RICE PRICES AS HARVEST SEASON STARTS

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said the Department of Agriculture (DA) expects better palay harvest this year, adding that the government has to continue carrying out programs that could further develop the sector to ensure food security even with a good harvest.

"Sabi ng Department of Agriculture ay mas malaki ang ani natin ngay-on taon na ito kaysa sa nakaraan kaya't sa production side naman ay nagiging maayos," President Marcos said during a rice distribution event in Iriga City, Camarines Sur. "Ngunit, kailangan natin ayusin ang sistema mula sa pagtanim, mula sa pag-research and development hanggang sa pagtanim, hanggang sa processing, hanggang sa distribution, marketing, hanggang sa retail. Kaya't ginagawa po natin ay binubuo natin lahat 'yan."

Marcos expressed hope that Filipinos could soon feel the effects of more improved production in the agriculture sector.

The current government thrust is to address the gaps and challenges in the sector particularly rice distribution that affects supply and prices.

"Marami naman tayong bigashindi lang nailalabas nang tama. Kaya't hindi problema ang supply sa atin dito sa Pilipinas," said the President, adding it was among the reasons why the government had to impose a cap on rice prices.

Asked during a media interview on the implementation of the price ceiling on rice, Marcos said with the start of the harvest season, rice prices will soon drop in the market.

"Sa palagay ko, pagpasok ng ani,

dahil papasok na, nag-aani na tayo at pagpasok niyan, sa palagay ko maki-kita na natin na bababa 'yung presyo," he said. "Market forces. Baka kung 'yung merkado mismo ang bumababa na ang presyo, puwede na nating bawasan 'yung mga kontrol na nilagay natin."

In the meantime, the government has to implement measures such as the imposition of price cap, provision of cash aid to rice retailers, as well as setting new palay buying price range for the National Food Authority (NFA) to help farmers and secure inventory. PCO



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Rice price cap-affected sari-sari store owners to get cash aid

UPON the directive of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is set to distribute next week cash assistance to sari-sari store owners who were affected by the implementation of the mandated price ceiling on rice in coordination.

In its update to the Office of the President, the DSWD said that it is set to distribute cash assistance to sari-sari store owners on September 25 to 29 in coordination with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) in terms of identifying the beneficiaries.

President Marcos has directed the DSWD to provide cash assistance to

small rice retailers affected by the implementation of the mandated price ceiling on regular and well-milled rice in the whole country.

The chief executive approved the implementation of the mandated PhP41.00 price ceiling on regular milled rice and the PhP45.00 price cap on well-milled rice through the issuance of Executive Order No. 39.

Based on its latest report, the DSWD said that it has already released PhP92.415 million worth of financial assistance to 6,161 out of the 8,390-target micro and small rice retailers affected by the implementation of the EO 39 nationwide. PCO

Date: 25 SEP 2023 Page: 2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Presyo ng bigas bababa na ngayong anihan - PBBM

Dahil sa panahon na nang anihan ng palay, posibleng maramdaman na ng publiko ang pagbaba sa presyo ng bigas sa bansa.

Ayon kay Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. asahan na magiging maayos ang supply pagkatapos ng anihan dahil mas malaki ang magiging ani ngayon ng mga magsasaka.

Sinabi pa ni Marcos, na base sa tulad sa kanya ng Department of Agricul-

ture (DA) mas malaki ang produksyon ngayong taon ng mga magsasaka.

Kaya sa palagay ng pangulo, dahil panahon na nag anihan kaya makikita na rin ang pagbaba ng presyo ng bigas.

Sa sandaling mangyari umano ito ay maaari ng bawasan ang ipinatupad na kontrol sa merkado partikular ang ipinatupad na price ceiling.

Kasabay nito, iginiit din ni Marcos na mara-

ming suplay ng bigas sa bansa at hindi lamang ito nailabas ng tama kaya ito ang inaayos ngayon ng gobyerno.

Dahil dito kaya kailangan muna umanong ayusin ang sistema sa agrikultura, simula sa pagtatanim, processing hanggang sa distribusyon at retail para maramdaman ang mas pinahusay na produksyon sa sektor ng agrikultura. (Gemma Garcia)



China sets up floating barrier in Panatag Shoal

By **MARK ERNEST VILLEZA**

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) yesterday condemned the China Coast Guard (CCG)'s recent installation of a floating barrier in the southeast area of Panatag Shoal.

According to PCG spokesperson on the West Philippine Sea Jay Tariela, the floating barrier, estimated to be around 300 meters in length, was discovered by PCG and BFAR personnel aboard *BRP Datu Bankaw* during a routine maritime patrol on Sept. 22

in the vicinity of Bajo de Masinloc, the old name of Panatag also known as Scarborough Shoal.

The installation of the floating barrier was carried out by three CCG rigid hull inflatable boats and a service boat from the Chinese maritime militia upon

the arrival of the BFAR vessel in the vicinity of the shoal.

According to reports from Filipino fishermen, the CCG vessels typically deploy floating barriers whenever they observe a significant number of Filipino fishermen operating in the area.

During the routine maritime patrol, the BFAR vessel noted the presence of more than 50 Filipino boats actively engaged in fishing activities within the region.

Recognizing the importance of

supporting the fishermen, the BFAR provided them with various grocery items and fuel subsidies to sustain their operations.

However, four CCG vessels (CCG-3065, CCG-3066, CCG-3105 and CCG-3301) initiated 15 radio challenges in an attempt to expel the BFAR vessel and fishermen from the area.

The CCG crew claimed that the presence of the BFAR vessel and Filipino fishermen violated international

Turn to Page 6



China sets From Page 1

law and the domestic laws of China.

In response, the BFAR vessel acknowledged each radio call and reiterated that they were conducting a routine patrol within the territorial sea of Panatag.

Notably, upon realizing the presence of media personnel aboard the BFAR vessel, the CCG vessels maintained a safe distance and eventually withdrew.

PCG Commandant Admiral Artemio Abu expressed his commitment to supporting the BFAR and other national government agencies in ensuring the safety and security of Filipino fishermen.

The PCG affirmed its dedication to collaborating with all relevant government bodies to address these

challenges, uphold maritime rights and safeguard maritime domains.

The temporary barrier "prevents Filipino Fishing Boats from entering the shoal and depriving them of their fishing and livelihood activities," *Agence France Presse* quoted the PCG and BFAR as saying in a joint statement condemning its installation.

"We are very grateful for this assistance," said Johnny Arpon, 53, whose 10-meter boat *Janica* arrived at the shoal in time to stock up on extra diesel.

Some of the Filipino fishermen crowding around the *BRP Bankaw* in small outriggers to receive provisions climbed aboard to eat snacks and drink fresh water.

They told journalists they had

been chased and water cannoned by Chinese vessels in the past and even had their anchors cut.

"They should give it back to us because this is ours," said Nonoy de los Reyes, 40, referring to Panatag Shoal. "They should leave this place."

After decades of overfishing by countries surrounding the waters, the men have to spend longer at sea to catch enough fish to cover their costs and, hopefully, make a small profit.

China's blocking of the shoal had made the situation even tougher and the fishermen said they hated them for it.

"We barely have any catch so we'll probably need to stay two more weeks," said Alex del Campo, 41, who had already spent more than a week at sea.

A 'champion' of UNCLOS

The Philippines is a "champion" of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), with its primacy affirmed by the 2016 arbitral award on the South China Sea, Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo said.

"We advocate the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with international law. This has always been our position with respect to the disputes in the West Philippine Sea, inasmuch as we are prepared to defend our sovereignty, sovereign rights and territorial integrity," Manalo told the United Nations General Assembly on Saturday.

"As an archipelagic state whose destiny is intimately linked with the oceans, the Philippines is a champion

of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea," he added.

The arbitral award, he said, definitively settled the status of historic rights and maritime entitlements in the South China Sea, declaring without legal effect claims that exceed entitlements beyond the geographic and substantive limits of UNCLOS.

In a landmark ruling on July 12, 2016, the Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration found no legal basis for China to claim historic rights to a "nine-dash line" in the South China Sea, and Beijing had breached the sovereign rights of the Philippines, which brought the case.

The arbitral ruling declared Panatag as a common fishing ground, over which no country has exclusive rights. — With Pia Lee-Brago, AFP



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Retailers urge gov't: Lift rice price caps

By BELLA CARIASO

The government should lift the rice price ceiling as retail prices of the grains have started to decline amid the ongoing palay harvest, according to the Grains Retailers Confederation of the Philippines (Grecon).

"The inflow of rice in the market has improved because of the harvest. The harvest started for weeks already and it is expected to peak at the end of the month until October (2023). We observed that many retailers are

now selling good quality rice at P41, P42 until P45 (per kilo)," Grecon national spokesman Orly Manuntag said yesterday.

Executive Order 39 imposed a P41 and P45 per kilo price ceiling on regular and well-milled rice on Sept. 5.

Meanwhile, *sari-sari* store owners affected by the price ceiling will receive cash assistance this week, Malacañang announced yesterday.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), in co-

ordination with the Department of Trade and Industry, will distribute cash aid from Sept. 25-29 upon the directive of President Marcos.

A P15,000 cash aid will be distributed to *sari-sari* store owners, according to DSWD spokesman Romel Lopez.

Based on its latest report, the DSWD said it has released P92.415 million worth of financial assistance to 6,161 out of the targeted 8,390 micro and small rice retailers nationwide affected by the price cap.

As for the buying price of palay or unhusked rice, Manuntag noted that the recent increase from P19 per kilo to P23 per kilo will protect farmers as the farmgate price of palay dropped following the implementation of the price ceiling.

Marcos on Sept. 18 announced that the National Food Authority (NFA) Council has set new buying prices for palay to increase the income of farmers.

But despite the increased palay buying price, some farmers in Nueva

Ecija are not selling their palay to the NFA as private traders offer more than P23 per kilo, according to farmers' group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP).

The KMP and the Federation of Free Farmers are urging Congress to increase the NFA's 2024 budget to allow the agency to procure 20 percent of the local palay production and bring back the cheaper NFA rice in the markets.

— With Helen Flores, Mark Ernest Villeza



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

RCEP LOAN RELEASES HIT P2.2B

THE Land Bank of the Philippines (LandBank) has released P2.2 billion in loans to rice farmers and cooperatives as of the end of July in an effort to boost local rice production in the country.

LandBank said that it extended loans to 13,701 rice farmers as of July 31, 2023 since 2019 when the Expanded Rice Credit Assistance under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ERCA-RCEF) started.

"LandBank is doing its share to strengthen local rice production by providing accessible and responsive financial assistance to rice farmers. In partnership with the **DA (Department of Agriculture)**, the ERCA-RCEF program forms part of our commitment to advance the agriculture sector and empower Filipino farmers," said LandBank President and Chief Executive Officer Lynette Ortiz.

The ERCA-RCEF is a credit facility aiming to boost the productivity and income of small rice farmers and cooperatives. It is being implemented in partnership with the DA.

It also aims to alleviate the initial impact of Republic Act

11203, or the "Rice Tariffication Law," that removed quantitative restrictions on rice imports in favor of liberalized importation of the grains but with tariffs.

"LandBank has fully disbursed the allocated fund for ERCA-RCEF from 2019 to 2022 and shall continue to make available P500 million in loans annually until 2024 to cooperatives and rice farmers registered under the RSBSA (Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture) in the country's 38 rice-producing provinces," said LandBank.

A total of P1.1 billion of LandBank's loan releases under ERCA-RCEF directly financed palay or unmilled rice production of individual rice farmers listed under the DA's RSBSA.

Meanwhile, P507.5 million was allotted for relending by cooperatives to its rice farmer-members; P394.1 million for rice trading and milling; and P222 million for the purchase of farm machines and equipment.

Of the 13,701 beneficiaries, 4,783 were from Region 2 (Cagayan Valley), particularly the rice-producing provinces

of Cagayan, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino.

The state-run bank also assisted 1,858 beneficiaries from Region 3 (Central Luzon); 1,463 from Region 6 (Western Visayas); 1,334 from Region 13 (Caraga Region); 1,323 from Region 4B (Mimaropa); and the rest from Regions 1 (Ilocos Region), 4A (Calabarzon), 5 (Bicol Region), 7 (Central Visayas), 8 (Eastern Visayas), 9 (Zamboanga Peninsula), 10 (Northern Mindanao), 11 (Davao Region), 12 (Soccsargen) and the Cordillera Administrative Region.

"The ERCA-RCEF Program allows individual rice farmers to borrow up to 90 percent of their total project cost at a low fixed interest rate of 2 percent per year," said LandBank.

The loan may be used to purchase farm inputs for rice and rice seed production, farm machines and equipment for production and post-production, working capital for rice and seed trading, as well as relending and rediscounting existing loans of small rice farmers listed under the DA's RSBSA.

JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

China installs barrier in Bajo de Masinloc

WHAT NOW? Filipino fishermen look at the floating barrier placed by China to stop them from fishing in rich waters. PHOTO COURTESY OF PCG



The Manila Times[®]

Date: SEPT. 25, 2023 Page: A 2 A8



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

BY FRANCO JOSE C. BAROÑA AND BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO

THE China Coast Guard (CCG) has installed a floating barrier near the Bajo de Masinloc (Scarborough Shoal) in the West Philippine Sea to keep out Filipino fishing vessels, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) reported on Sunday.

Bajo de Masinloc lies within the country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

The PCG said a 300-meter-long barrier was deployed in the southeast portion of the shoal.

The barrier was discovered by the PCG and the Bureau of Fisheries and

Aquatic Resources (BFAR) personnel aboard the BRP Datu Bankaw during a routine patrol on Saturday.

Filipino fishermen who frequent the area said three CCG rigid hull inflatable boats (RHIBs) and a Chinese maritime militia service boat put up the barrier just as the BFAR

vessel was approaching.

The CCG vessels usually install floating barriers whenever they monitor a large number of Filipino fishermen in the area, the PCG said.

In a joint statement, the PCG and BFAR condemned the deployment of

the barrier, saying it prevents Filipino fishing boats from entering the shoal.

The BFAR personnel distributed grocery items to Filipino fishermen on 50 boats near the shoal.

They also provided fuel subsidies to the fishermen.

At least four CCG vessels with bow numbers 3065, 3066, 3105 and 3301 attempted to drive away the BFAR vessel.

In their radio challenges, the CCG crew issued radio warnings to the BFAR vessel and Filipino fishermen were encroaching into Chinese territory.

The BFAR vessel responded to the

►BarrierA8

The Manila Times®

Date: SEPT. 25, 2023 Page: A1 & A8



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

radio calls and emphasized that they were on a routine patrol within Philippine territory.

"Upon realizing the presence of media personnel onboard the BFAR vessel, the CCG vessels

maintained a safe distance and moved away," the PCG said.

PCG Commandant Admiral Artemio Abu expressed his commitment to support BFAR and

other national government agencies in ensuring the safety and security of Filipino fishermen.

Bajo de Masinloc lies about 198 kilometers west of Subic Bay, well within the Philippines' EEZ.

The shoal is also being claimed by China and Taiwan.

It had been administered by the Philippines as part of the province of Zambales, until 2012, when China sent warships to drive away Filipino fishing boats.

Chinese maritime forces eventually occupied the shoal.

The incident prompted the Philippine government to file a case against China before the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague, Netherlands in 2013.

Manila contested the legality of Beijing's nine-dash line on which its claim over a vast portion of the South China Sea is based.

In 2016, the court declared China's claim as invalid, at the same time upholding the sovereign rights of the Philippines in the area.

The ruling did not stop China from building structures on Kagitingan (Fiery Cross), Panganiban (Mischief), Zamora (Subi), Burgos (Gaven), Kennan (Hughes), Mabini (Johnson South) and Calderon (Cuarteron) Reefs, which are all part of Philippine territory.

Several nations support the arbitral ruling.

In a statement Sunday, Senate President Juan Miguel "Migz" Zubiri asked the PCG "to immediately cut and remove all these illegal structures located at our West Philippine Sea not just to assert our sovereign rights to the area but to protect our fishermen from any possible accidents that may arise from these illegal structures."

"We, in the Senate, stand by our brave men and women who risk their lives for the freedoms that we enjoy today," Zubiri said.

Sen. Ana Theresia "Risa" Hontiveros said in a text message China's "cruelty knows no bounds" as she urged the government to review its foreign policy toward China.

"Filipino fisherfolk are among the poorest in our country. They only rely on our seas for their food and their livelihood," Hontiveros said.

She said China had destroyed many coral reef systems in the West Philippine Sea. "These natural resources would no longer be enjoyed by the next [Filipino] generation," she said in Filipino.

"I trust that the Philippine Coast Guard can escort our fisherfolk and ensure that they pass through the floating barriers," Hontiveros said. "We should no longer accept acts like this going unpunished. If we allow China's bullying to continue, it will cost the lives of our own people."

Date: SEPT. 25, 2023 Page: A1 & A2 & A3



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

SENATORS ASSAIL CHINA'S FLOATING BARRIERS IN WPS

STORY BY MARLON RAMOS AND FRANCES MANGOSING

Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri asked the Philippine Coast Guard to remove the booms which Chinese vessels were caught in the act of installing at Bajo de Masinloc. Sen. Risa Hontiveros also criticized this latest action in the West Philippine Sea (WPS). **A2**



Senators assail China's floating barriers in WPS

FROM A1

By Marlon Ramos
and Frances Mangosing
@Team_Inquirer

Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri on Sunday asked the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) to remove the floating devices which Chinese vessels were caught in the act of installing at Bajo de Masinloc (Scarborough Shoal) off Zambales province, according to the PCG.

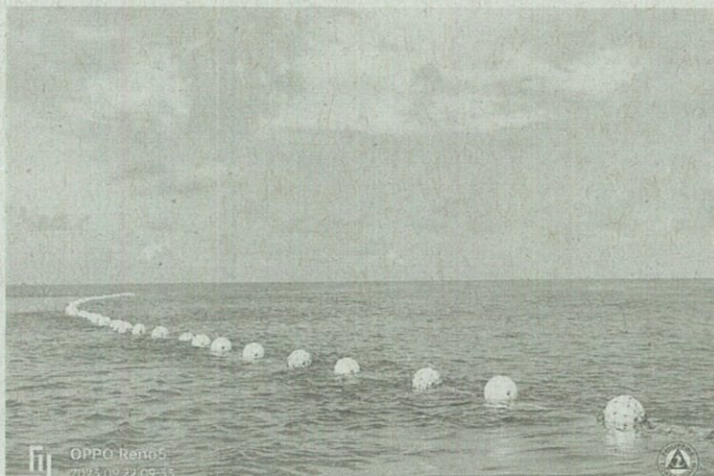
The PCG said on Sunday these booms were intended to block Filipino fishing boats.

Zubiri said these obstructions were not allowed within the country's 370-kilometer exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

"They have no right to put any structures within our [EEZ and] these structures pose a danger to passing fishing boats that can get entangled with the lines and cause considerable damage to the propellers and engines of [sea vessels]," he told reporters.

Sen. Risa Hontiveros joined Zubiri in lambasting China's latest hostile action in the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

"China's cruelty knows no



BOUNDARY ON WATER Booms which the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said were installed by the China Coast Guard are seen from another vantage at Bajo de Masinloc. —PHOTO FROM PCG

bounds. They have no shame in aggressively blocking our fishermen in our own seas," she said.

"We should no longer accept acts like this going unpunished. If we allow China's bullying to continue, it will cost the lives of our own people," she warned.

'Captured on camera'

The PCG and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) on Sunday accused the China Coast Guard of installing the 300-meter "float-

ing barrier" at Bajo de Masinloc to prevent Filipino boats from entering their traditional fishing ground.

The booms were discovered while BFAR's vessel BRP Datu Bankaw, manned by the PCG, was on a routine maritime patrol on Sept. 22.

"The most important incident that we monitored with this maritime patrol... is that we captured on camera that the Chinese coast guard deployed their three rigid hull inflatable boats together with the

service boat of one of the Chinese maritime militia vessel in installing floating barriers" in Bajo de Masinloc, PCG spokesperson for the West Philippine Sea Commodore Jay Tarriela said in a press briefing.

The Chinese vessels were "in a hurry to install those floating barriers because they monitored that there was a BFAR vessel and there was also a large number of Filipino fishing vessels" in the vicinity, he said.

The PCG did not remove the barriers yet because, as Tarriela explained, "we intend to document this for the National Task Force on the West Philippine Sea to learn about this particular activity of [China] and then we're going to leave it to them as to whatever legal or diplomatic action is necessary."

Amicable resolution

The PCG and BFAR, in a joint statement, said they "strongly condemn" the installation of the floating barriers, "depriving [Filipino fishermen] of their fishing and livelihood activities."

Despite China's frequent aggressive actions in the West Philippine Sea, the Philippines has reiterated that it continues to advocate an

A3

Date: SEPT. 25, 2023 Page: A1 } A2 } A3



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

SENATORS ASSAIL CHINA'S FLOATING BARRIERS IN WPS

FROM A2

amicable resolution of disputes and has called for adherence to international law to keep the Indo-Pacific region "open, free, stable and peaceful."

Speaking on behalf of President Marcos at the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City on Saturday, Foreign Secretary

Enrique Manalo told member nations that the "preservation of a rules-based global order is our collective responsibility."

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), meanwhile, has denounced the reported destruction of coral reefs and marine ecosystems in the West Philippine Sea.

"Harmful human interference, such as the destruction and illegal exploitation of any

part of our marine ecosystem is a loss, not only to our country, but to the region and to the world," the DENR said in a statement released on Sept. 22 following the signing of the first-ever treaty on protecting the international high seas at the United Nations.

According to the department, scientific studies had established that the marine ecosystem in the Kalayaan Island Group was crucial for the

supply of fish and coral larvae in the country and the region.

"We, therefore, strongly deplore any activity that leads to the damage and destruction of the coral reefs in the Kalayaan Island Group," DENR said, adding that it was ready to support the concerned government agencies currently exploring legal options that the country might pursue. —WITH REPORTS FROM TINA G. SANTOS, JANE BAUTISTA AND REUTERS INQ



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

LANDBANK disburses P2.2B in loans to rice farmers by end-July

LAND BANK of the Philippines (LANDBANK) said that it released loans worth P2.2 billion to 13,701 rice farmers and cooperatives in the seven months to July.

In a statement Sunday, the bank said the loans were disbursed from the Expanded Rice Credit Assistance under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ERCA-RCEF).

LANDBANK said that P1.1 billion in loans financed palay (unmilled rice) production for farmers in the Department of Agriculture's (DA) Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture.

It added that P507.5 million went to cooperatives for relending to its rice farmer-members; while P394.1 million supported

rice traders and millers, and P222 million financed the acquisition of farm machinery and equipment.

LANDBANK President and Chief Executive Officer Lynette V. Ortiz said that "the ERCA-RCEF program forms part of our commitment to advance the agriculture sector and empower Filipino farmers."

It said 4,783 beneficiaries were from Region 2, "particularly the rice-producing provinces of Cagayan, Nueva Vizcaya, and Quirino."

Additionally, 1,858 were from Region 3; 1,463 from Region 6; 1,334 from Region 13; and 1,323 from Region 4-B.

Under the ERCA-RCEF program, rice farmers are allowed to borrow up to 90% of

the project cost, with a 2% fixed interest rate per year.

It said that loans may be used to purchase inputs for rice and rice seed production, machinery and equipment for production and post-production, working capital for rice and seed trading, as well as relending and rediscounting outstanding loans of small rice farmers.

LANDBANK said it will continue to give out P500 million in loans annually to cooperatives and rice farmers in the DA registry who are based in the 38 rice-producing provinces.

It added that the bank fully disbursed its allocated funding for the program between 2019 and 2022. — **Adrian H. Halili**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Rice inventory declines in early June; corn stocks edge up

THE rice inventory declined 18.1% year on year, while that of corn rose 1.5% at the start of June, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said.

In a report, the PSA said that the rice inventory during the period was 1.82 million metric tons (MT), with holdings of households, commercial warehouses and the National Food Authority (NFA) all declining.

"As of June 1, about 48.7% of the total rice stocks were from the households, 46.6% were

from the commercial sector, and 4.7% were from NFA depositories," it said.

Household rice, dropped 15.7% to 885 thousand MT, while commercial warehouses held 848.11 thousand MT, 14.8% lower from a year earlier.

Rice held by the NFA amounted to 85.1 thousand MT, down 51.5% year on year.

On a month-on-month basis, the rice inventory fell 3.4% from May.

"Rice in the NFA depositories and household sector reg-

istered a monthly decrease of 15% and 11.0%, respectively... While (an) increment of 7.6% was noted in the rice stocks held by the commercial sector," the PSA said.

Meanwhile, the PSA also said the corn inventory rose 1.5% year on year to 886.46 thousand MT during the period.

"Corn inventory in the household sector increased by 30.5%, while corn stocks from the commercial sector recorded an annual decline of 1.1%," it said.

Corn held by commercial establishments was 791.96 thousand MT, accounting for 89.3% of the total.

Household corn, on the other hand, rose to 94.5 thousand MT, or 10.7% of the total.

Compared to a month earlier, the national corn inventory rose 32.6%.

"Corn stocks from the commercial and household sectors as of June 1 exhibited monthly growth of 35.4% and 12.9%, respectively," the PSA said. — **Adrian H. Halili**



Landbank loans to rice farmers hit P2.2B

The Land Bank of the Philippines (Landbank) has released P2.2 billion in loans to 13,701 rice farmers and cooperatives as of end-July 2023 through the Expanded Rice Credit Assistance under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (ERCA-RCEF).

A total of P1.1 billion of the bank's loan releases under ERCA-RCEF directly financed palay production of individual rice farmers listed under the Department of Agriculture's (DA) Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture (RSBSA), Landbank said.

Meanwhile, P507.5 million was

earmarked for relending of cooperatives to its rice farmer-members; P394.1 million for rice trading and milling; and P222 million for the purchase of farm machineries and equipment.

Of the 13,701 beneficiaries, 4,783 hailed from Cagayan Valley, particularly the rice-producing provinces of Cagayan, Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino.

Landbank also assisted 1,858 beneficiaries from Central Luzon, 1,463 from Western Visayas, 1,334 from Caraga, 1,323 from Mimaropa and the rest from the regions of Ilocos, Calabarzon, Bicol, Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas,

Zamboanga Peninsula, Northern Mindanao, Davao, Soccsksargen and the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Implemented in partnership with the DA, the ERCA-RCEF is a credit facility that aims to boost the productivity and income of small rice farmers and their cooperatives and cushion the initial impact of the Rice Tariffication Law.

Landbank said it has fully disbursed the allocated fund for ERCA-RCEF from 2019 to 2022, and will continue to make available P500 million in loans annually until next year to cooperatives and rice farmers registered under the

RSBSA in the country's 38 rice-producing provinces.

The ERCA-RCEF program also allows individual rice farmers to borrow up to 90 percent of their total project cost at a low fixed interest rate of 2 percent per year, Landbank added.

The loan may be used to purchase farm inputs for rice and rice seed production, farm machineries and equipment for production and post-production, working capital for rice and seed trading, as well as relending and rediscounting of existing loans of small rice farmers listed under the DA's RSBSA. - **Jed Macapagal**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Chiz presses raps vs rice smugglers

Says non-filing of cases may be part of 'areglo'

BY RAYMOND AFRICA

SEN. Francis "Chiz" Escudero yesterday pressed government to file charges against rice smugglers and hoarders as he raised the possibility that a deal might have been reached with the suspected lawbreakers in exchange for the non-filing of criminal complaints.

Escudero, in an interview with dzBB radio, made the remarks as he casted doubt into the legality of the distribution of smuggled imported rice that were seized by the Bureau of Customs (BOC) after it raided numerous warehouses and storage facilities in the country.

He said giving away confiscated rice to poor families is not a simple decision since there are processes to be followed under the law before such action can be taken.

"Kaugnay naman sa sinabi na pinamimigay... alam mo, madaling sabihin na parang sa pelikula, 'o nahuli, illegal, ipamigay sa mahirap,' parang Robin Hood ba. Pero may proseso 'yan, hindi naman pupwede na gaya ng sabi ko na may krimen pero wala 'yung criminal. Kung illegal na mag hoard ng bigas eh di dapat may katuwang ka na hoarding (In relation to the distribution of confiscated rice, it is easy to say like what we see in

the movies, that 'We should just give away the confiscated rice to the poor' just like doing a Robin Hood. But there is a process that should be followed. It cannot be that there is a crime but there is no criminal. If it is illegal to hoard rice, then someone should be held liable)," he said.

Escudero also said: "May proseso 'yan unless, sabi ko nga, nakipag-areglo kaya hanggang ngayon wala tayong naririnig na pangalan. Kumbaga 'sige na kunin niyo na ang bigas, hindi na ako papalag, ipamigay niyo na sa mahirap, wala lang kaso (There is a process, unless there was an agreement that's

why we have not heard the name of a single hoarder or smuggler of rice. It's like this, 'okay you can get the rice, I will not resist, distribute them to the poor, as long as no charges will be filed against me.')

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) last week started the distribution of seized sacks of imported rice to beneficiaries of the government's 4Ps program in Mindanao.

President Marcos Jr., who led the distribution of the seized rice in Zamboanga provinces, has said that the government adhered to

.....
See SAYS > Page B2

Malaya Business Insight

Date: SEPT. 25, 2023 Page: 31 of 32



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

SAYS

due process in confiscating the smuggled rice as owners of the rice and warehouses were given a 15-day notice to justify their possession of the goods.

The President said the government decided to distribute the confiscated rice since the concerned owners did not give their respective explanations.

'AREGLO'

Escudero said rice smuggling and hoarding are classified as crimes under the Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act. They are non-bailable offenses and carry a penalty of life imprisonment.

In raising the issue of a possible deal or arrangement between the government and the smugglers and hoarders, he noted that while the BOC has been raiding warehouses and storage facilities left and right, it has not identified or charged any of the owners with the crime of smuggling or hoarding.

He cited BOC records showing that 159 companies/individuals have been charged before the National Prosecution Service from February 2016 to February this year, but only nine cases have been filed in courts. The rest are still under investigation.

He alleged that the BOC this could be because the bureau only gives the name of the company which imported the rice and then submits weak evidence when it files cases before the Department of Justice.

And since the pieces of evidence are weak and only companies are charged, Escudero said the DOJ will then be compelled to dismiss the charges.

"Dahil kulang sa ebidensiya na sinubmit ng BOC, isang klase ng areglo 'yan. Hindi ba ikaw ang nagsampa ng kaso tapos biglang mawawala ang ebidensiya? Eh paa-no nga naman mako-convict 'yan ng National Prosecution Service natin? (Because the evidence presented by the BOC is weak, that is also a kind of compromise agreement. You filed the charges and then the evidence will go missing? How can our National Prosecution Service convict them?)" he said.

He added a company cannot be charged with a crime since the company itself cannot commit a crime. He said it should be the owners or officers of the company who should be slapped with criminal cases.

"Hindi naman makakagawa ng krimen ang kompanya. Ang gumagawa ng krimen ay tao. Kung may parusa man sa kompanya ay tatanggalan lang ito ng registration sa SEC (Securities and Exchange Commission), pero hindi naman puwedeng mag-hoarding, smuggling ang kompanya. Tao ang gumagawa nun kaya tao ang dapat kasuhan (A company cannot commit a crime. The ones who commit crimes are people and if there is a sanction against a company, it will only be stripped of its registration with the Securities and Exchange Commission. A company cannot hoard or smuggle. People commit crimes and it should be people who must be charged in court)," he pointed out.

Escudero also said that smugglers and hoarders would not have mustered the courage to do illegal activities if they are not working in cahoots with government officials.

"Ang tanong lang ay hanggang gaano katas ang kasabwat nila (sa gobyerno), kung meron man? Dahil klaro na hindi ito at wala ito sa interes ng Pangulo na umuupo pa rin bilang kalihim ng Department of Agriculture (The question is, how high [referring to position in government] are their cohorts in government, if there are any? Because clearly, the President, who is also the secretary of the Department of Agriculture, is not very interested [in pursuing the issue])," he said.

Escudero said the President should now appoint a permanent and full-time agriculture secretary since as Chief Executive, he cannot attend to the problems of the department as he is pre-occupied with a lot of other issues.

He also the different bureau and division chiefs under the DA do not have direct access to Marcos as they will have to pass the protocols of Malacañang or the Presidential Management Staff when they wish to consult the DA secretary even on trivial matters.

Marcos has said he will continue

to head the DA because he wants to solve the department's problems hands on.

Escudero said there is nothing wrong with the President's intention, but he cannot perform all the tasks needed as agriculture secretary.

"Maganda ang intention niya. Ang problem, iisa lang ang katawan niya, da-dalawa ang kamay niya at ang 24 na oras niya ay 24 oras nating lahat. Hindi kayang pagsasama-samahin na gampanan pa niya ang trabaho bilang pangulo ng bansa na i-supervise lahat ng departamento. Importante din naman na matutukan ang bawat butil ng problema na kailangan asikasuhin dito sa DA (The President's intention is good. The problem is, he only has one body, two arms, and his 24 hours is also our 24 hours. He cannot perform his role as president of the country while supervising all the departments. It is important that the smallest problem of the Department of Agriculture be attended to and solved)," he said.

He said the President does not have to appoint an expert from the agriculture sector to be the DA secretary as long as that person is a good manager and administrator who is willing to listen to the people and has good leadership qualities.

RICE SUBSIDY

The DSWD yesterday said it has already distributed P92.415 million worth of financial grant to 6,161 micro and small rice retailers affected by the implementation of the price cap on rice.

In its report to Malacañang, the DSWD said the target beneficiary of the P15,000 grant under its Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP) is 8,390 micro and small rice retailers nationwide.

The department said it will start distributing the financial grant to sari-sari stores affected by the rice price ceiling from September 25 to 29.

President Marcos Jr. has directed the DSWD to provide cash assistance to small rice retailers affected by the implementation of Executive Order 39 that mandated the temporary price ceiling of P41.00 on regular milled rice and P45.00

Malaya Business Insight

Date: SEPT. 25, 2023 Page: B1 + B2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

on well-milled rice.

The President, during his visit to Iriga in Camarines Sur on Saturday, reiterated that he was forced to order a price cap on rice due to the illegal activities of hoarders and smuggler and profiteers.

"Napilitan tayo na mag-price cap dahil naalarma talaga ako. Kung ako lang, ayokong pakialaman ang merkado ngunit hindi naman tama ang takbo ng merkado dahil kinakalikot nga nung mga hoarder at saka ng mga smuggler. Kaya't naglagay tayo ng price cap (We were forced to put a price cap because I was alarmed. If it was up to me, I do not want to meddle with the market but the market operation was no longer right due to the manipulation of the hoarders and smugglers. That's why we implemented a price cap)," Marcos said.

Asked about the status of the implementation of the price ceiling on rice, Marcos said that with the start of harvest season, rice prices will soon drop in the market.

He also reassured the public that the country has enough supply of rice at present and the DA has already said that it expects rice harvests to go higher this year.

"Pagpasok ng ani, dahil papasok na, nag-aani na tayo at pagpasok niyan, sa palagay ko makikita na natin na bababa iyung presyo. Baka kung iyung merkado mismo ang bumababa na ang presyo, puwede na nating bawasan iyung mga kontrol na nilagay natin (The harvests will come in, we are already harvesting rice crops and it will soon be available, I think we will see the prices go down then. The market itself might lower the prices, then we can reduce the controls that we have implemented)," said the President.

He reiterated that the supply of rice is not a problem in the Philippines, but there is a gap in the distribution due to the manipulation of hoarders, smugglers, and profiteers.

On Saturday, Marcos and the DSWD distributed 2,000 sacks of rice to poor families in Iriga in Camarines sur.

Prior to this, they distributed of 1,500 rice sacks to Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino (4Ps) beneficiaries in Zamboanga Sibugay and Zamboanga City last week and 1,200 sacks to poor families General Trias in

Cavite last Friday.

"Patuloy tayong kikilos upang matiyak na ang mga tulong ng pamahalaan ay mabilis na matatanggap ng bawat pamilyang Pilipino (We will continue to act to ensure that the services of the government are immediately received by each Filipino family)," the President said in a Facebook post late Saturday following his visit to Iriga.

BAGONG PILIPINAS SERBISYO FAIR

On Saturday, the President, in his visit to Nabua in Camarines Sur, launched the "Bagong Pilipinas Serbisyo Fair (BPSF)" service caravan which the government plans to bring to all 82 provinces in the country.

It was simultaneously launched in Laoag, Ilocos Norte led by Presidential son and Ilocos Norte Rep. Ferdinand Alexander "Sandro" Araneta Marcos III; in Tolosa, Leyte led by Speaker Martin Romualdez; and Poblacion Monkayo, Davao de Oro led by Special Assistant to the President Anton Lagdameo.

The BPSF is the country's biggest service caravan which aims to provide major government services to less fortunate Filipinos in various communities across the country. It features the government's flagship programs such as Kadiwa ng Pangulo, Passport on Wheels, Driver's License registration/assistance, among others. The caravan will run for two days.

The BPSF offers social services from the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Human Settlement and Urban Development (DHSUD), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), National Food Authority (NFA), Office of Civil Defense (OCD) and the Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA).

Under livelihood and education-

al services, the following agencies offered services: Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), Commission on Higher Education (CHED), Department of Science and Technology (DOST), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), Technical Skills and Development Authority (TESDA), DENR, OCD, and FDA.

Under regulatory functions, the BPSF extended services from the following government agencies: Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippine National Police (PNP), Land Transportation Office (LTO), Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Bureau (LTFRB), Professional Regulations Commission (PRC), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

Other government services include those from the Department of Information and Communication Technology (DICT), Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Social Security System, PhilHealth, Pag-IBIG, PCSO, Public Attorney's Office (PAO), and the Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP).

Among major social services offered by the BPSF include: enrollment in TUPAD or GIP, Legal counseling, distribution of farm inputs and machinery, Tulong Dunong Program, TESDA scholarships and program enrollment, financial assistance programs, Kadiwa Stores, SB Corp. services for MSMEs, educational assistance, LTO driver's license renewal, DFA passport application, NBI clearance application, police clearance application, LTOPF renewal/application, PSA birth certificate application, Pag-Ibig membership and housing loan, SSS membership application, GSIS UMID application, Postal ID application, National ID application, PhilHealth consultation, Public service training, PRC renewal, PAO free legal services and PhilHealth registration.

As of yesterday, 103,647 people have participated in Nabua, Camarines Sur; 87,158 participants in Laoag, Ilocos Norte; 57,345 in Tolosa, Leyte; and, 74,539 in Monkayo, Davao de Oro. - *With Jocelyn Montemayor*

Date: 25 SEP 2023

Page: A1 and A2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PCG, BFAR SCORE CHINA'S BID TO BLOCK BAJO DE MASINLOC



PHILIPPINE Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Jesus Domingo shares a toast with His Excellency Ambassador Huang Xilian at rites for the 74th founding anniversary of the People's Republic of China at the Shangri-La Hotel in Taguig. Despite their continuing verbal spats on sea disputes, the two countries affirmed that such do not comprise the sum of their long relationship. BERNARD TESTA

THE Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on Sunday scored the installation by the China Coast Guard (CCG) of a floating barrier at the southwest portion of Bajo De Masinloc (BDM), preventing the entry of Filipino fishing boats (FFB) and their crews.

Joining the outcry was the

Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

This act of the CCG deprived Filipino fisherfolk of their livelihood, PCG spokesperson for the West Philippine Sea, Commodore Jay Tarriela, said in a statement Sunday.

SEE "PCG," A2

Date: 25 SEP 2023

Page: A1, 2, A2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

PCG...CONTINUED FROM A1

"The floating barrier with an estimated length of 300 meters was discovered by the PCG and BFAR personnel onboard BRP Datu Bankaw when they conducted routine maritime patrol on September 22, 2023 at the vicinity of BDM," Tarriela said.

BDM is also known as Scarborough Shoal.

It was also learned that three CCG's rigid hull inflatable boats (RHIBs) and Chinese Maritime Militia's service boat installed the floating barrier upon arrival of the BFAR vessel in the vicinity of the shoal.

The Filipino fishermen reported that the CCG vessels usually install floating barriers whenever they monitor a large number of Filipino fishermen in the area.

During the routine maritime patrol, the BFAR vessel observed more than 50 FFBs engaged in fishing activities in the area.

Recognizing the importance of supporting the artisanal or subsistence fishing of these fishermen, the BFAR provided them with various grocery items and fuel subsidies to sustain their operations, Tarriela said.

"However, a total of four CCG vessels [CCG-3065, CCG-3066, CCG-3105, and CCG-3301] initiated a series of 15 radio challenges in an attempt to drive away the BFAR vessel and FFBs," he added.

The CCG crew alleged that the presence of the BFAR vessel and Filipino fishermen violated international law and the domestic laws of the People's Republic of China.

Tarriela said the BFAR vessel responded to each radio call and emphasized that they were carrying out a routine patrol within the territorial sea of BDM.

Notably, upon realizing the presence of media personnel

onboard the BFAR vessel, the CCG vessels maintained a safe distance and moved away.

Tarriela added that PCG commandant Admiral Artemio M. Abu committed to supporting the BFAR and other national government agencies in their efforts to ensure the safety and security of our Filipino fishermen.

"The PCG will continue to work closely with all concerned government agencies to address these challenges, uphold our maritime rights and protect our maritime domains," Tarriela stressed.

Gibo's pushback

IN a related development, Department of National Defense (DND) Secretary Gilberto C. Teodoro Jr. on Saturday scored China for claiming that the grounded BRP Sierra Madre in Ayungin Shoal is causing marine damage in the WPS.

"The statement of China that the grounded Sierra Madre is causing irrevocable harm is, to put it as politely as possible—hypocritical. Talk about the pot calling the kettle black! China continues to damage the WPS by its illegal reclamation activities in the SCS [South China Sea] and it was found to be a violator of international law in the 2016 Arbitral Award when such activities damaged the marine environment," he added.

Teodoro also said that "disingenuous propaganda lines" such as this only serve to expose China's insincerity.

He added that such action will only heighten the mistrust by the Filipino people and the rest of the world of the Chinese government.

Earlier, the Philippines condemned China for causing extensive coral damage to Rozul Reef and Escoda Shoal in the WPS. **Rex Anthony Naval**



Rice sufficient but distribution a problem -- PBBM

THERE is enough rice supply in the country but gaps in distribution disrupt market availability and supply, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. said on Saturday.

"Pero ang dami pa rin kulang, ang dami pa rin kulang sa pag-distribute. Marami naman tayong bigash hindi lang nailalabas nang tama. Kaya't hindi problema ang supply sa atin dito sa Pilipinas," President Marcos said during a rice distribution event in Iriga City.

"Sabi ng Department of Agriculture ay mas malaki ang ani natin ngayon taon na ito kaysa sa nakaraan kaya't sa production side naman ay nagiging maayos. Ngunit, kailangan natin ayusin ang sistema mula sa pagtanim, mula sa pag-research and development, hanggang sa pagtanim, hanggang sa processing, hanggang sa dis-

tribution, marketing, hanggang sa retail."

The government is already implementing the necessary reforms, Marcos said, hoping that the public could soon feel the effects of those measures.

Asked during a media interview on the status of the implementation of the price ceiling on rice, Marcos said that with the start of harvest season, rice prices will soon drop in the market.

For the meantime, Marcos said the government has to implement measures such as the imposition of price cap, provision of cash aid to rice retailers, as well as setting new palay buying price range for the National Food Authority (NFA) to help farmers and secure inventory.

PCO

Date: 25 SEP 2023 Page: 2



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Mangingisdang Pinoy hinarangan...

China naglatag ng floating barrier sa WPS - PCG

Kinondena ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) at Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) ang paglalagay ng China Coast Guard ng floating barrier sa may South portion ng Bajo

de Masinloc na humaharag naman sa mga Filipino Fishing Boats (FFBs) na makapasok sa Scarborough shoal at pagkakait sa kanila na makapangisda.

Ayon sa PCG ang floating barrier na may-

roong haba na 300 metro ay natuklasan ng mga tauhan ng PCG at BFAR habang sakay ng BRP Datu Bankaw nang magsagawa sila ng routine maritime patrol noong Setyembre 22, 2023 sa paligid ng Bajo de Masinloc (BDM).

Nabatid na tatlong Rigid Hull Inflatable Boats (RHIBs) ng China Coast Guard at service boat ng Chinese

Ni DORIS
FRANCHE-BORJA

Maritime Militia ang naglagay ng floating barrier pagdating ng BFAR vessel sa paligid ng shoal.

Iniulat ng mga mangingisdang Pilipino na kadalasang naglalagay ng mga floating barrier ang mga sasakyang pandagat ng CCG sa tuwing may malaking bilang ng mga mangi-

ngisdang Pilipino sa lugar.

Nasa apat na barko ng CCG ang nagsagawa ng 15 radio challenges para tabuyin ang barko ng BFAR at mga Fishing boats.

Ayon sa China Coast Guard crew na ang presensiya ng barko ng BFAR at ng mga Filipino fishermen ay labag sa international law at domestic laws ng People's Republic

of China (PRC).

Tumugon naman ang BFAR vessel at sinabing sila ay nagsasagawa ng routine patrol sa loob ng territorial sea ng Bajo de Masinloc. Nang mapansin ng CCG na may mga media personnel ang sakay sa barko agad ito dumistansiya at umalis.

Ipinahayag ni PCG Commandant, CG Admiral Artemio M Abu, ang kanyang pangako na suportahan ang BFAR at iba pang

ahensya ng pambansang pamahalaan sa kanilang pagsisikap na matiyak ang kaligtasan at seguridad ng ating mga mangingisdang Pilipino.

Patuloy na makikipagtulungan ang PCG sa lahat ng kinaaukulang ahensya ng gobyerno upang tugunan ang mga hamong ito, itaguyod ang ating mga karapatang pandagat at protektahan ang ating mga maritime domain.

Date: 25 SEP 2023 Page: 3



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Magsasaka bigyan ng disenteng kita - Villar

Nanawagan si Sen. Cynthia Villar sa lahat na suportahan ang mga Pinoy na magsasaka para magkaroon tayo ng ligtas at masustansyang pagkain.

Sa hakbang na ito, ani Villar, marami ang mahihimok na higit na magsikap upang makamit ang food security.

"We should also help rural communities access better services from government to make them stay there to feed us all," sabi pa ng chairperson ng Senate agriculture committee.

Guest Speaker si Villar sa pulong ng Rotary Club of Makati sa Dusit Thani Hotel, Makati City.

Nagsalita siya tungkol sa Food Security at Green Revolution.

Sinabi ni Villar na mahalaga at napapanahon ang mga paksang ito dahil nahaharap tayo sa maraming hamon sa agricultural sector.

Subalit, tiniyak niya ang pangakong iaangat at po-

protektahan ang Philippine agriculture sector.

Ginunita niya na noong 1973 sa ilalim ng Marcos regime, tanyag ang Green Revolution programs para sa rice sufficiency.

Kamakailan lamang, inilunsad ng Department of Agriculture sa ilalim ni President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ang bagong bersyon ng Green Revolution upang mapabuti ang nutrisyon ng mga Pilipino sa pagdami ng produksyon at supply ng sariwang prutas at gulay sa urban at rural areas.

Layunin nitong gawin ang mga komunidad na 'green edible landscapes' sa paggawa ng vegetable gardens.

"I have also been leading the campaign on vegetable gardening by distributing seeds and organic fertilizers while enticing people to grow their own food thru our four Villar Social Institute for Poverty Alleviation and Governance (Villar Sipag) Farm Schools," sabi ni Villar.



"It is important for us to collaborate and share best practices," said former Malaysia Trade Secretary and ASEAN BAC Malaysia's Dato Sri Mustapa Mohamed (left) in the meeting last September 15, 2023 with members of the private sector led by ASEAN BAC Philippines Chair Joey Concepcion.

PHILIPPINES, MALAYSIA PRIVATE SECTOR TO COLLABORATE ON AGRICULTURE AND MSME DEVELOPMENT

Former Malaysia Trade Minister Dato Sri Mustapa Mohamed was in Manila recently to meet with members of the Philippine private sector led by ASEAN Business Advisory Council (BAC) Philippines chair Joey Concepcion, to kickstart points of collaboration and firm up agreements that could benefit the palm oil, rubber, fruits, and poultry industries of both countries. This came only a week after the Philippines private sector signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) on agriculture and MSME development with seven ASEAN member states, including Malaysia.

The meeting, held last September 15, 2023, revolved around agriculture and MSME development, resource sharing, cross-border agribusiness mentorship, and enhanced public-private sector partnerships between the two countries. The former Minister is now the ASEAN BAC Malaysia Chairman of Agriculture and Food Security Working Group. Also present from Malaysia were Dato Abdul Malik Melvin Castelino, the Malaysian ambassador to the Philippines; Hubert Humphrey Malaysia President Khairuddin Tahir, and Malaysia Trade Commissioner Zalani Intan.

"The MOU between the Philippines and Malaysia is the beginning of what I hope will be a tradition of collaboration within ASEAN," said Concepcion. "This is what ASEAN is supposed to be: a brotherhood of countries helping each other and creating prosperity for the entire region," he said.

In addition to Malaysia, the Philippines also signed MOUs with Indonesia, Brunei, Laos, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Singapore to jointly conduct studies and share mentorship channels in agriculture, agriculture technology, food security, entrepreneurship business

models and value chain development among small farmers, private enterprises and government entities, as well as identify the business requirements to develop trade and investment opportunities in agri technology, products and services. Vietnam and Thailand are expected to join soon.

ASEAN BAC Malaysia was the first to sign the MOU. Chairman Tan Sri Nazir Razak signed with ASEAN BAC Philippines last July 27, 2023 during the State Visit to Malaysia of Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. The signing was followed by a bilateral discussion held on the sidelines of the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit in Indonesia last September 5, where the CEOs and Presidents of some of the largest corporations in the Philippines and in Malaysia were in attendance.

During the meetings, the parties agreed that both countries can benefit from their respective competencies and advantages in growing their palm oil and rubber industries. Much potential was also seen in the animal feeds, corn and coconut industries, as well as the halal market in the Philippines. The representatives from Malaysia said that the key is raising awareness and knowledge of the investment opportunities for Malaysian business in the Philippines, and providing platforms for working together.

"I am optimistic that given the swift progress with our Malaysia partnership, we will soon have equally promising inroads with the rest of the ASEAN countries," said Concepcion. "Our goal here is to connect Philippine agriculture with their counterparts in the ASEAN, create investment opportunities and foster beneficial relationships for both countries," he said.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

More farmers' groups join calls to remove Diokno, Balisacan

More farmers' groups joined the calls for President Marcos to remove Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno and Socio-economic Planning Secretary Arsenio

Balisacan over their alleged preferential treatment on importation by moving to bring down tariffs on rice and other imported agricultural products.

At least 20 more peasant organizations signed the petition to replace Diokno and Balisacan, after six groups initiated the campaign to axe the two members of the economic team.

Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) chairman Rosendo So vowed that more protest ac-

tions will be held in front of the Department of Finance building to bat for the removal of Diokno and Balisacan.

"More agricultural groups are joining the call of the rice industry stakeholders to reject all proposals to reduce or remove tariffs on our most loved food commodities: rice, pork, chicken and corn. We all know that Secretaries Diokno and Balisacan are not only proposing tariff reduction on rice; but also, on pork, chicken and corn," So said.

He added that other farmers groups involved in livestock, poultry, corn and allied sectors support efforts to bring to Marcos the opposition of the entire local agriculture industry on the alleged plot of Diokno and Balisacan on tariff reductions.

"It is easy (for Balisacan and Diokno) to say that the tariff reduction will not affect the farmers as they only stay in the offices, far from the mud and hard life of farmers," So maintained.

He said that reducing or eliminating rice tariffs would put in peril the tariff collection under the Rice Tariffication Law.

"The projected 3.9 million metric tons of rice imports next year would mean a loss of P33.5 billion for the rice industry. Revenue losses from tariff reduction from pork imports would mean forgone revenues of P16 billion to P18 billion, while tariff reduction for chicken imports would mean government losses of P6 to 8 billion," he said. — **Bella Cariaso**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Barred from entering 'Kalburo' Shoal, Zambales fishers' catch dwindling



TEA TIME

TITA C.
VALDERAMA

TO some small-scale fishermen in Zambales, Scarborough Shoal located 120 nautical miles off Masinloc town does not belong to the Philippines.

"Kung sa atin 'yun, eh bakit kami hinaharangan ng Chinese coast guard, ayaw kami papasukin," says William, whose main source of livelihood is fishing for almost four decades now.

During an informal conversation last weekend with William in the coastal barangay of Collat, he said he was losing hope that the Philippines will ever be able to win against China in the maritime dispute over Scarborough Shoal, which locals refer to as Kalburo.

"Paano ka naman mananalo eh 'yung mga bangka namin ang liliit lang, eh 'yung barko nila kalalake, tinitingala naming parang tore (How can you win over them when our boats are too little while we look up to their ship like a tower)," he laments.

Scarborough Shoal, also known as Panatag Shoal and Bajo de Masinloc, is a triangular-shaped chain of reefs and rocks around a 150-kilometer (km)-wide lagoon, 220 km from Masinloc, which is well within the 200-nautical mile (370 km) Philippine exclusive economic zone.

China calls it Huangyan Dao and lays claim to it purportedly based on historical rights.

Filipino fishermen used to enjoy a bountiful catch from the area and used it as a safe haven against storms before China's coast guard and maritime militia vessels established a presence in the area and practically took control over the shoal.

"Papalapit pa lang kami itinatayo na kami. Hinahabol kami ng rubber boats hanggang lumayo na kami," says William, who had sold his bigger boat and now uses a small one in fishing within municipal waters.

He used to join a team of small-scale fishermen for at least 18 hours of sailing to Bajo de Masinloc. Eight to 10 of them would load their small boats on what

they call a mother boat, bringing with them food stock that would last a few days. Upon reaching the shoal, they would unload their small boats and start catching fish. "Kanya-kayang diskarte na pagdating doon... Napakaraming isda; ilang oras lang halos mapuno na 'yung bangka," William recalls.

That is now a thing of the past.

In 2012, China asserted its sweeping claims in nearly all of the West Philippine Sea and seized control of the shoal, prompting the Philippines to seek UN arbitration. In 2016, the arbitral tribunal in The Hague invalidated China's claims, but China continues to ignore the ruling.

Since then, Filipino fishermen are limited to fishing outside the perimeter of the shoal because China has taken control inside, says Leonardo Cuaresma, president of the New Masinloc Fishermen's Association. They can't even take shelter in the shoal during rough seas and bad weather, as they used to before 2012.

"Sa loob ng shoal, panatag doon pag malakas ang alon, pag masama ang panahon (Inside the shoal, [the water is] calm there when [there are] big waves [outside], when the weather is bad)," he says. "Ngayon, kahit gusto ng ating Filipino fishermen, hindi sila nabibigyan ng shelter dahil hinaharang sila ng Chinese coast guard (Nowadays, even when our Filipino fishermen want to seek shelter there, they could not because the Chinese coast guard is blocking them)," Leonardo adds.

The other fishermen we talked to said they were fearful of being apprehended by the Chinese coast guard, who are armed when accosting them as they



■ Fishermen in Barangay Collat, Masinloc, Zambales use these smaller boats to fish within the municipal waters since Chinese coast guard shooed them away from Scarborough Shoal. PHOTO BY TITA VALDERAMA

attempt to approach the shoal.

They are chased away by armed Chinese maritime militia, making them feel like thieves if they make it inside the shoal.

Most of the fishermen in Barangay Collat say they are not teaching their sons how to fish because of the threats and intimidation they have experienced from the Chinese intruders, and the income they earn from it can hardly sustain a family.

This is reality on the ground. How can you convince them that Scarborough Shoal is ours when they have been shooed away even before they could get near its entrance? It's like being prevented from entering your own house.

What used to be their traditional fishing grounds for decades, assuring them of plentiful catch and good income, has become a source of tension between the Philippines and China.

Intimidation and harassment by the Chinese coast guard have threatened not only their safety and main source of livelihood. Some are barely able to send their children to school, thanks to the government's free education program and the assistance of the local government units and groups providing them with school supplies.

Their catch has become fewer

and smaller, giving them not even a third of what they used to earn. As prices of basic commodities continue to rise and their incomes dwindle, daily survival is quite a challenge to most of them.

A number of the mother boats, which ferry the smaller boats to the lagoon, have been sold while a few which remained haggle for lower prices for the fishermen's catch, leaving them with less income than what they should be getting. Competition at sea has also become tight as fishermen from other provinces catch from their payao, which attracts yellow fin tuna and other bigger species like blue marlin.

The Fisheries Code defines payao as a fish-aggregating device consisting of a floating raft anchored by a weighted line with suspended materials such as palm fronds to attract pelagic and schooling species common in deep waters.

How can you convince the fishermen to assert their rights to fish in Scarborough Shoal when their own government discourages them from doing so to avoid tension with the intruders?

The situation of other Filipino fishermen in other shoals, reefs and islands in the West Philippine Sea are not different from those in Zambales.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Imee warns 'rice smugglers'

BY CELSO M. CAJUCOM

CABANATUAN City, Nueva Ecija: Two lawmakers said they hope that the rice situation will stabilize soon, particularly in Region 3 (Central Luzon) and Region 1 (Ilocos).

But first, Sen. Maria Imelda Josefa "Imee" Marcos also said challenges posed by the so-called lean months of July, August and

September have to be overcome by rice farmers as well as by rice traders.

Meanwhile, Marcos added,

rice traders who are said to be also "rice smugglers" should be slapped with criminal charges "because they are the ones making the economic life of ordinary Filipinos more miserable."

The senator on Thursday, Sept. 21, 2023, led the distribution of emergency assistance from the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to 1,200 beneficiaries in Caba-

natuan City.

In her speech, she promised that all local governments of 27 towns and five cities of Nueva Ecija will be given P5 million each under the AGRI Tayo. Jan program of the senator.

The LGUs' chief executives will only have to submit to her office any agriculture-related projects.

Rep. Rosanna "Ria" Vergara of the 3rd District of Nueva Ecija

said the lean season will finally be over by September, enabling middle-class consumers to possibly purchase commercial rice at lower prices.

Dr. Richard Simangan, provincial director the Department of Trade and Industry, said retailers from the province are compliant with the rice price ceilings for regular milled and well milled rice at P41 and P45 per kilo,

respectively.

Out of 500 registered retailers, 139 received P15,000 each in assistance from the DSWD this September.

Today, some retailers in the province are reportedly selling the regular milled rice at P38 a kilo.

The National Food Authority is expected to buy palay from farmers at P18 (wet) and P23-25 (dry).



GUEST COLUMNIST

Amid soaring rice prices, a holistic approach to rice self-sufficiency in two years proposed



BUSINESS TALK
PCCI CHAIRMAN WILLIAM S. CO

As the Philippines grapples with soaring rice prices, the pursuit of food security has never been more pressing. It is against this backdrop of rising food costs that we turn to an ambitious yet timely proposal put forth by Dr. Rodolfo C. Undan, a professional Agricultural & Biosystems engineer, former NIA administrator, former DA assistant secretary, and a retired president of Central Luzon State University. His comprehensive approach to achieving self-sufficiency in rice and other food items is not just a strategy; it's a lifeline for Filipinos facing the burden of high rice prices.

In recent months, the Philippines has witnessed a steep increase in the cost of rice. For countless Filipino families, rice is not just a meal; it is the essence of their diet and culture. The sharp rise in rice prices has weighed heavily on household budgets, exacerbating the economic challenges already posed by the ongoing pandemic.

In times of hardship, the affordability and availability of rice become paramount concerns. The Filipino people need relief, not just in the form of temporary subsidies but in the form of sustainable solutions that can empower our nation to feed itself.

Amid these trying times, Dr. Undan's proposal stands as a timely response to the plight of Filipinos. His comprehensive approach addresses not only the symptoms of the crisis but also the root causes, offering a roadmap toward self-sufficiency.

By promoting modern farming technologies, enhancing irrigation, and diversifying rice varieties, Dr. Undan's vision seeks to bolster rice production, ensuring a steady supply that can help stabilize prices. The call for cost reduction through innovative techniques and the support for local machinery production is not just about efficiency; it's about making rice more affordable for ordinary citizens.

What distinguishes Dr. Undan's approach is its holistic nature. It recognizes that achieving self-sufficiency is not a one-dimensional endeavor. It involves the entire rice production ecosystem, from the fields to post-harvest processes and policy adjustments.

Efforts to reduce post-harvest losses, improve harvesting practices, and invest in infrastructure are vital for ensuring that the benefits of increased production reach consumers in the form of stable prices.

His proposal acknowledges that the path to food security requires more than just agricultural initiatives; it necessitates legislative support. The call for a review of the Rice Tariffication Law and measures against hoarding and smuggling is a response to the changing landscape of our rice industry.

In the face of rising rice prices, Dr. Undan's two-year target for self-sufficiency becomes not just an ambitious goal but a pressing necessity. It challenges our nation to rise above short-term challenges and envision a future where no Filipino goes to bed hungry due to the unaffordability of rice.

As we diversify food sources, intensify fish and seafood culture, and promote alternative grains and root crops, we not only enhance food security but also reduce our vulnerability to price

Rising rice prices have cast a shadow of uncertainty over the tables of Filipino families. Undan's comprehensive approach provides a ray of hope, a path toward a brighter future where rice is not a source of anxiety but a symbol of stability and self-reliance.

fluctuations in the rice market.

Rising rice prices have cast a shadow of uncertainty over the tables of Filipino families. Undan's comprehensive approach provides a ray of hope, a path toward a brighter future where rice is not a source of anxiety but a symbol of stability and self-reliance.

The pursuit of self-sufficiency in rice is not just an economic goal but a statement of our commitment to the well-being of every Filipino. It is a timely call to action, a promise that we can secure our food supply and ensure that the high price of rice becomes a thing of the past.

(Dr. William S. Co is chairman of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) and director of the Agriculture and Fishery committee.)

Date: SEPT. 25, 2023 Page: A5



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

More groups buck proposal to slash tariffs on agri goods

By JASPER EMMANUEL Y. ARCALAS

[@jearcalas](#)

MORE agricultural groups, including sheep and rabbit raisers, are opposing the proposal to reduce tariffs on imported commodities like rice as the government would lose almost P60 billion in revenues.

In a joint statement, the allied industries of the grains and livestock industries threw their support behind the calls to reject the "proposed" reduction on tariffs on imported rice, pork, chicken and corn.

"The other agricultural industries of hog, chicken, corn and allied sectors have joined our call so that our plea would reach the President," the statement read, which was publicly released to the media by the Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (Sinag) on Sunday.

"The directive of the Philippines is clear: strengthen and support local production and not importation and smuggling."

The statement's signatories have grown to 26 from 11 groups.

The joint statement now includes the Sheep and Goat Industry Philippines, New Alliance of Rabbit Breeders Association, United Luzon Mango Stakeholders Association Inc., Aqua Farmers Ph, and Community Legal Help and Public Interest Center.

The joint statement claimed that both Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno and Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan are planning to reduce tariffs not just for rice but also for imported pork, chicken and corn.

Diokno and Balisacan have publicly announced earlier that they support the reduction of rice tariffs to cushion the impact of

rising global prices on domestic grain prices.

However, the two have not made public statements regarding the reduction in the tariffs of pork, chicken and corn.

Marcos, who is also the agriculture secretary, extended the lower tariffs on the four commodities—rice, pork, chicken and corn—until the end of the year.

Diokno has disclosed previously that pertinent inter-government agencies have been reviewing the implementation of the lowered tariff rates on the four commodities.

The agricultural groups called again for the resignation of Diokno and Balisacan over their tariff-reduction proposals.

"Up until today, there remains no compelling reason for the need for tariff reduction as farmers are now harvesting palay," the

statement read.

"Global rice prices have nothing to do with the recent spike in rice retail prices. The President has said that it was caused by hoarding, profiteering and smuggling."

The groups argued that reducing or "eliminating" the tariffs on rice would result in the loss of P33.5 billion in tariff collections for the rice industry, based on a 3.9-million metric ton import projection.

The groups claimed that pork tariff reduction would result in foregone state revenues amounting to between P16 billion and P18 billion while tariff reductions on chicken imports would lead to P6 billion to P8 billion in revenue losses.

The groups, however, did not disclose the tariff rates for pork and chicken that they used in estimating the revenue losses for the two commodities.



Kaso ng mga rice smuggler, hoarder inareglo - Chiz

NAKARATING sa impormasyon ni Senador Francis "Chiz" Escudero na inareglo ang kaso ng mga smuggler at hoarder kaya walang nakukulong sa kanila kahit na may malakas na batas laban sa large-scale agricultural smuggling.

Ayon kay Escudero, maaaring pumayag ang mga smuggler na ipamahagi na lamang sa mahi-

hirap ang mga nakum-piskang bigas kaysa ito-loy ng gobyerno ang kaso laban sa kanila.

"Ang duda ng ilan ay kapalit ng hindi pagkaso o pagbanggit man lang ng pangalan ay ibigay nyo na lang 'yong bigas at nang mapamigay sa mahirap. Ang problema doon ay technically ay hindi iyon legal," wika ng senador sa isang ra-

dio interview.

Naging kalakaran na raw ito sa gobyerno dahil base sa datos na nakuha ng Senado, mula 2016 hanggang 2023, sa 129 kinasuhan ay 9 lang ang dinidinig sa korte dahil ang iba ay dinismis sa kakulangan ng ebidensiya.

"Nagkaaregluhan ng yata at ni isa ay walang nababanggit? At ayon

din kay Senator (Cynthia) Villar, ayon sa DOJ daw noong mga nagdaang taon 'yong hinuli kaugnay ng parehong gawain ay karamihan ay nadismis dahil sa kakulangan ng ebidensiyang sinubmit ng Bureau of Customs sa DOJ para i-prosecute yung mga diumano ay nagho-hoarding at nag-i-smuggling," dagdag ni Escudero.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Mga sinamsam na bigas ilegal ipamudmod - Escudero

Hindi umano legal na ipamahagi ng gobyerno ang smuggled na bigas na nakumpiska ng mga awtoridad sa ginawang pagsalakay sa isang warehouse sa Zamboanga City noong Setyembre 15, ayon kay Senador Francis 'Chiz' Escudero.

"Ang problema doon ay technically ay hindi 'yun legal, maganda man ang intensiyon," pahayag ni Escudero sa panayam sa DZBB.

"Halimbawa na lang,

may bodega ka, bigas man o anumang laman, inakusahan ka ng hoarding o smuggling, hindi naman 'yan basta-basta puwedeng bunutin at ipamigay, tulad nga ni Robin Hood sabi ko," paliwanag pa niya.

Sabi ni Escudero, may sinusunod umanong proseso bago kumpiskahin at ipamahagi ang mga puslit na mga kontrabando maliban na lang kung nakipag-areglo ang may-ari ng bodega o nagtago ng bigas.

"May proseso 'yan bago ma-confiscate ng pamahalaan, may proseso 'yan bago puwede mapamigay sa gustong pagbigyan ng pamahalaan maliban na lang kung nakipag-areglo 'yung may-ari ng bodega at nagtago ng bigas na 'sige na kunin n'yo na lang pero huwag na ninyo akong kasuhan', ani Escudero.

"Yan ang tanong ng marami at tanong ko, nagkaaregluhan nga ba kung kaya't ni isa walang nababanggit," dagdag pa niya. (Dindo Matining)



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

London cocoa posts 3% weekly loss

LONDON — London cocoa futures on ICE closed higher on Friday as the market showed signs of resuming its long-term uptrend, but were down 3% in the week.

Coffee finished down, with the robusta type posting a 7% weekly loss.

COCOA: March London cocoa settled up £23 or 0.8% at £2,962 a metric ton, although the market posted a weekly loss of 3%.

The cocoa market has been supported by supply issues including crop disease in the key producing region, West Africa, following heavy rains.

"Antagonistic weather conditions are set to provide the cocoa market with vigorous support if not further bullish momentum ahead of the start of the main

harvests across West Africa," BMI, a unit of Fitch Solutions, said in a note.

December New York cocoa fell \$13 or 0.4% to \$3,582 a ton.

SUGAR: October raw sugar settled up 0.04 cent or 0.1% at 26.97 cents per pound (lb) as the market continued to consolidate just below a 12-year high of 27.62 cents set earlier this week.

Trade house Sucden said on Friday that prices are likely to remain high partly due to lower production in India.

China will hold an auction of its first sale of state sugar reserves since 2016 next week amid tightening supplies.

"I think the market had already anticipated that move," said a US broker, adding that the sale of sugar reserves pushed Chi-

nese domestic prices down and reduced the window for imports.

December white sugar fell \$2.00 or 0.3% at \$730.80 a ton. The contract lost 2.3% in the week.

COFFEE: December arabica coffee settled down 3.70 cents or 2.4% at \$1.5115 per lb with the contract posting a weekly loss of 4.5%.

Dealers said this year's harvest in top grower Brazil was now virtually complete, with half of the crop sold, while the market was keeping an eye on a heat wave moving over the world's top grower which has raised concerns about next year's crop.

November robusta coffee was little changed at \$2,461 a ton, but it lost 7% in the week, the most among the soft commodities complex. — **Reuters**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Mexico researchers show progress on drive to replace US corn imports

TEXCOCO, Mexico — Researchers at a top Mexican agricultural university this week showed the progress they had made in producing more non-genetically modified (GM) yellow corn seeds to help replace imported grain from the United States that is at the center of a major bilateral trade dispute.

Experts at the Autonomous University of Chapingo, on the northeastern flank of Mexico City, unveiled advances in developing seeds for planting to offset corn imports as Mexico battles with the United States, its top trading partner, over its plan to limit use of GM corn.

Three-meter-high corn stalks rose from the soil across an extensive field at Chapingo, early signs of a potential future alternative for food producers like Kellogg and Mexican brand Maseca, researchers said.

The fields, planted in May, were generating new strands of hybrid seed varieties to be tested in 2024 with release for planting in 2025, they said.

"What we're going to do is make available to the producer the seed that they need... and the technological package to achieve the desired yields," said Claudio Carballo, operational manager of Chapingo's corn seed production project.

The project aims in two years to develop enough non-GM seed

varieties cultivable in Mexico to replace about 6 million of the 18 million metric tons of corn that the country imports from the US annually, most of which is GM yellow corn.

Mexico's government wants to ban GM corn for human consumption, including its national staple, tortilla, on concerns about its health impact.

It still permits, for now, GM corn as livestock feed and in industrial use in some processed foods and cosmetics.

After months of tension over the policy, the US requested in August a dispute settlement panel under the US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) trade pact, arguing that Mexico's plan is not based in science.

President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador has been vocal about the need to reduce Mexico's dependence on US corn imports. However, his government has yet to significantly do so.

Still, Mexican Deputy Agriculture Minister Victor Suarez has said replacing 10% to 15% of corn imports is realistic.

"It's like people's income — if it's not enough, then they're dependent on someone. It's that simple," said Romel Olivares, a coordinator for the Chapingo project. "A country is the same."

— **Reuters**



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Soy up; wheat, corn firm

US soybean futures rose on Friday in a light technical rebound from six-week lows while corn and wheat also ticked higher on bargain-buying, but gains in all three markets were limited by a strong US dollar, analysts said.

Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) November soybeans settled up 2-1/2 cents at \$12.96-1/4, bouncing after a drop to \$12.92-1/2, the contract's lowest since Aug. 8. Some traders said the market's retreat below \$13 signaled potential further weakness.

CBOT December corn ended up 2 cents at \$4.77-1/4 a bushel, holding above this week's

low of \$4.67-3/4, the lowest on a continuous chart of the most-active contract since December 2020.

CBOT December wheat rose 3-3/4 cents to settle at \$5.79-1/2, climbing after early weakness.

A firm dollar hung over the markets at a time when US grains are already struggling to compete in the global export market with wheat supplies from Russia and Brazilian corn and soybeans.

"The biggest problem we have right now is demand for American products," said Jim McCormack, a managing partner at AgMarket.net in Barrington, Ill. - *Reuters*



'Climate crisis hinders efforts to eradicate hunger and poverty'

THE International Fund for Agricultural Development of the United Nations (IFAD) warned of the dire and irreversible effects that the climate crisis will have on hunger and poverty if sound adaptation measures are not taken quickly.

"The climate crisis hinders our efforts to eradicate hunger and poverty. The growing global population is dependent on a diet that places significant pressure on increasingly scarce land and water resources. This exacerbates inequalities and social unrest," said IFAD President Alvaro Lario during the UN General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

"It is imperative to invest in building resilience and in adaptation to climate change. This cannot wait. Investing in small-scale food producers is also vital to ensure a food secure future. And sustainable, biodiverse food production is essential to achieve sustainable development and climate goals. This also means investing in the livelihoods of the most vulnerable men and women around the world."

Speaking of recent natural disasters like the earthquake in Morocco and extreme weather events like massive flooding in Libya last week, Lario said developing countries and the world's poorest and most vulnerable women and men are on the frontlines of climate change and development gains can be quickly lost when shocks occur.

At the UNGA, Lario marked his first year in office and IFAD said it continues to build momentum as a UN agency and international financial institution that is "fit-for-purpose."

The recent declaration issued by G20 leaders gathered in New Delhi emphasized IFAD's role in the "fight against food insecurity," and encouraged member states to replenish the UN Fund's resources at the end of the year, when its 178 member states will pledge their donations and enable the fund to bring to scale investments that will transform the lives of millions of vulnerable people in rural areas.

Emmanuel Macron, President of France, continued to champion IFAD's campaign at the recent G20 Summit in New Delhi, India. "We need [a successful replenishment] because IFAD works to improve agriculture and food production systems in many countries, particularly those affected by the ripple effects of war."

Janet Yellen, United States Secretary of the Treasury, also highlighted IFAD's role at the G20 Summit: "We hope to move forward efforts such as supporting the global agriculture and food security program and working towards a successful replenishment of IFAD."

Under current trends, IFAD said 575 million people will still be living in extreme poverty in 2030. It is estimated that there will be as many people suffering from hunger by 2030 as in 2015 when the number reached 600 million people.

"Hunger remains a political issue, mostly caused by poverty, inequality, conflict, corruption and overall lack of access to food and resources. In a world of plenty, which produces enough food to feed everyone, how can there be hundreds of millions going hungry?" Lario said.

Date: 25 SEP 2023 Page: A5



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

India rice export ban is fueling risk of social unrest, UN says

INDIA'S rice export ban is boosting prices around the world, increasing the risk of political instability in Asia and Africa, according to the head of a United Nations agency.

Prices for the crop, a staple for half the world, surged to the highest in almost 15 years after the top shipper began curbing exports. India accounted for nearly 40 percent of the global rice trade in the past three years. Soaring prices are fueling concerns about food insecurity for billions of people in Asia and Africa who depend on the grain.

"Rice, especially in Africa, can certainly bring potential conflict or social unrest, which at this moment in time would be quite dangerous," Alvaro Lario, who leads the International Fund for Agricultural Development, said in a Thursday interview in New York.

The export ban is bringing back memories of 2008, when a global rice crisis put 100

million people at risk, many in sub-Saharan Africa. Back then, both Vietnam and India restricted exports. Food shortages have also contributed to unrest in the past, with surging wheat prices helping spark the Arab Spring that toppled governments just over a decade ago.

The impacts of bans "go beyond the borders of the countries" implementing such measures, Lario said. Rice is the "main concern" for food security—even more so than wheat, he said.

"Export bans have a lot of impact, especially on the most vulnerable, by raising prices and having a shock on prices," he said. "Generally they are not positive, neither for the local populations in the medium term, nor for the other countries."

Some regions in Africa that are more reliant on rice imports are already seeing impacts from higher prices, Lario said.

"We have to understand that many of

these people who consume this type of crop are sometimes on the brink of poverty," he said.

Corn supply boom

A GLOBAL sugar crunch that drove prices of the sweetener to an 11-year high is finally poised to ease—and it's thanks to a crop that might seem totally unrelated.

Corn output from agricultural powerhouse Brazil is surging, making it more profitable to use the grain to produce ethanol—a key fuel that powers cars in Latin America's biggest economy. As a result, mills that crush costlier cane are looking to produce more sugar and less biofuel.

"Anyone with money today is either investing in corn ethanol, or adding capacity to produce sugar," said Eder Vieito, senior commodity analyst at Green Pool Commodity Specialists.

Falling sugar prices would be a welcome respite for consumers battling rampant food

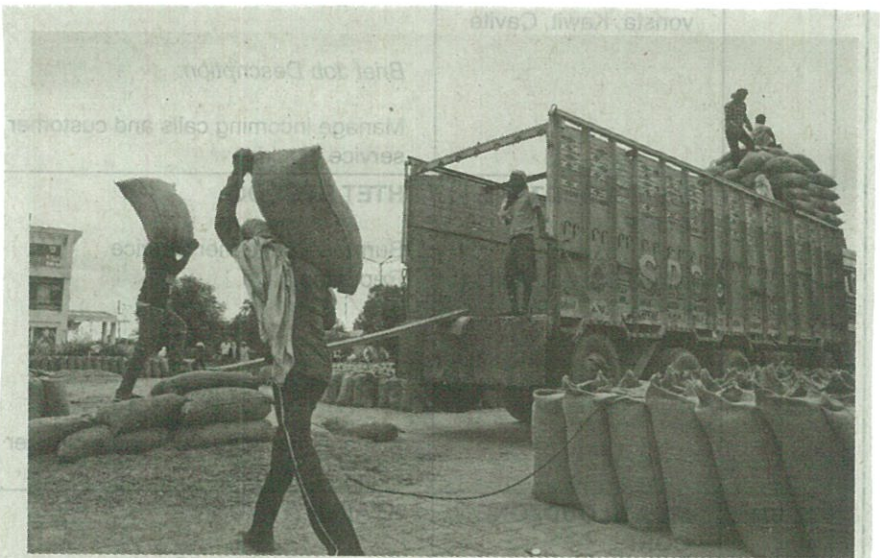
inflation. A gauge of agricultural commodity prices posted its biggest gain in 16 months in July, before retreating somewhat in August. Extreme weather has damaged sugarcane in India, the world's second-largest producer after Brazil.

Corn is taking a bigger share of the ethanol market in Brazil, which trails only the US among global producers of the biofuel. Ethanol from corn will account for nearly a fifth of all output of the fuel this season, from nearly zero five years ago. By 2033, its share could climb to as much as a third of total supply, consultancy Datagro predicts.

"Biofuel expansion will predominantly come from corn," said Renato Pretti, strategic planning officer at ethanol producer Cerradinho Bioenergia SA. The company, which uses both corn and sugarcane as raw material for fuel, is one of a growing number of mills diverting more cane to produce sugar and even investing in new sugar machinery.



LIBRARY
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE



WORKERS load bags of paddy rice on a truck at the grain market in Ambala, India, October 9, 2022. Rice is a staple food for about half of the world's population, with Asia producing and consuming about 90 percent of global supply. *BLOOMBERG NEWS*

Rising corn output in Brazil is allowing for bigger profits from ethanol as sales of byproducts like animal feed mostly cover the cost of the grain. Cane mills, in contrast, recently saw shrinking margins

from producing ethanol. The cost of making ethanol from corn was 16 percent lower versus producing the biofuel from sugarcane over the past two years, analysts at bank BTG Pactual said in a report. *Bloomberg News*