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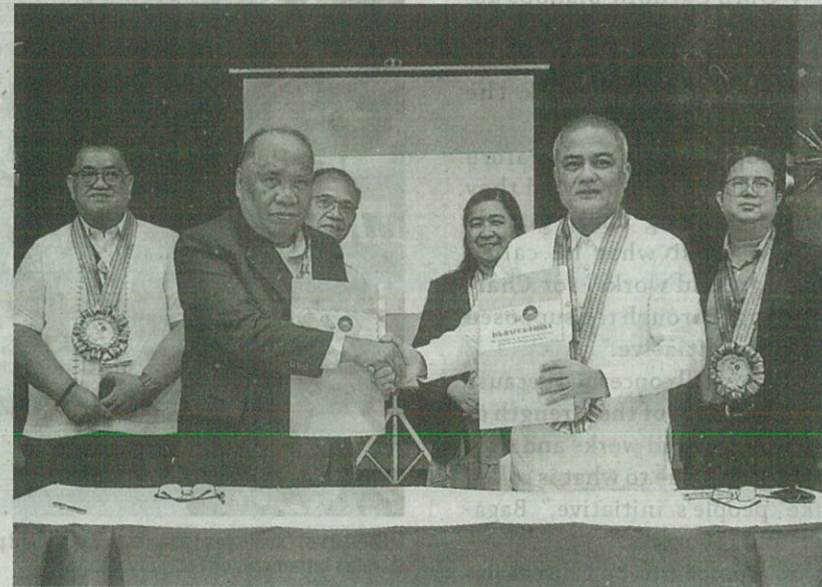
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PhilSA, DA forge pact on use of space tech for improved crop production

THE Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA) and the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Agricultural and Fisheries Engineering (DA-BAFE) entered into an agreement on February 21 to use satellite data and space technology applications to improve crop production and policy making, including during emergencies, for food security.



PHILSA Director General Joel Joseph Marciano Jr. (front, right) and DA-BAFE Director Ariodear Rico (front, left) sign a MOA to facilitate joint research and implementation in monitoring farm-to-market roads and agricultural commodities using space technology. PHILSA PHOTO

BusinessMirror

A broader look at today's business

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The two agencies will collaborate on the Farm-to-Market Road and Agricultural Commodity Geodatabase and Remote Sensing Application Phase 1 (or Digital Agri Phase 1) project in Nueva Ecija as pilot area, PhilSA said.

It aims to provide near real-time information to the agriculture sector, policy and decision-makers, and stakeholders.

PhilSA Director General Joel Joseph Marciano Jr., in his message, underscored the additional value of space-derived data for planning and monitoring of agriculture and its related infrastructure which will enhance the country's food security and economic growth.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. in his keynote message delivered by Atty. Mary Anne Pasion of DA, highlighted the role of digital revolution in the country's agri-fishery sector.

Laurel said it is offering new opportunities to enhance productivity, efficiency, and inclusivity.

By harnessing the powers of digital technologies, farmers can

access crucial information on road access status, among others, which will then empower them to make informed decisions and maximize their productivity, Laurel added.

DA-BAFE Director Ariodear Rico expressed how satellite imaging is necessary for road construction monitoring and assessment.

He said it will also help the bureau identify and locate where the roads are needed, especially in the part of the local government units.

The agreement also aligns with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s directive to establish the local FMR network plan, including its digitalization efforts.

Digital Agri Phase 1 will facilitate joint research, development, and operationalization of activities between the two government agencies through the provision of data from Earth observation satellites.

They will also use space applications and technologies for data collection, analysis, and dissemination for improved

decision making and sustainable development.

The project will cover the monitoring of FMRs via remote sensing, including road type, accessibility mapping, and infrastructure planning.

The near real-time images and information on FMRs are crucial for oversight agencies, particularly during emergencies like disasters and calamities, to enhance data collection.

It will serve as a decision-making support tool for DA to assist in planning, policy formulation, project implementation, and assessment.

Both agencies will also conduct joint research, development, and operationalization activities related to the planning and monitoring of agricultural commodities, specifically corn and onion.

They will cover crop stage and health, yield estimation and prediction, pest and disease detection, and land use mapping.

PhilSA will conduct a feasibility analysis on the appropriate open-source and commercial satellite images, conduct field surveys and validation activities in pilot areas in Nueva Ecija, and develop methodologies for near real-time image and monitoring.

These methodologies will be integrated into DA-BAFE's existing monitoring and evaluation tools for the implementation of FMRs, namely: the Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering Management Information System, and the Geographic Information System for Agricultural and Fisheries Machinery and Infrastructure.

The ceremonial signing of the MOA was joined by DA Undersecretary for Operations Roger Navarro, Director for ICT Service Honorio Flameño, PhilSA Director Ariel Blanco for Space Information Infrastructure Bureau, and Director Sonia Cabangon of Finance and Administrative Service.

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NEWS BRIEFS

El Niño damage now at P357.4M
The El Niño phenomenon's damage to the farm sector more than doubled to P357.4 million from P151.3 million reported previously, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said in its latest bulletin. The dry spell has affected 7,668 farmers in the regions of Ilocos, Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan), Western Visayas and Zamboanga Peninsula as of Friday afternoon. The volume of production losses was pegged at 11,480 metric tons (MT) for palay, 2,897 MT for corn and 225 MT for high-value crops spanning 6,523 hectares of land. The DA said 5,011 hectares of area dedicated to rice represents 0.52 percent of the total target area planted while 11,480 MT of affected palay is about 0.12 percent of the target dry cropping season output for 2024. In the case of corn, the area affected by El Niño stood at 1,263 hectares or 0.11 percent of the total target area planted. The estimated production loss of 2,897 MT is a fraction or 0.06 percent of target production for this year's dry cropping season. —JORDEENE B. LAGARE

CCC issues El Niño defense measures

With the effects of the El Niño now being felt across the country, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) has offered some tips to help the public cope with water shortages, rising temperatures and extreme weather conditions.

"Preparing for and coping with El Niño

requires community collaboration. The CCC encourages individuals to form neighborhood watch groups to monitor and address El Niño-related challenges together," CCC vice chairman and executive director Robert Borje said in a statement.

"Collaborative efforts

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can help identify solutions for common concerns and develop a stronger sense of resilience within your community," he said.

With soaring temperatures, Filipinos are advised to consider adding insulation to their homes to minimize or prevent heat from entering.

"Placing plants strategically in the home can also reduce heat absorption, provide shade and improve air quality," it said.

"Proper insulation is crucial to keep your home cool without depending on energy-consuming air conditioning. Check roofs, walls and windows to ensure they are insulated," CCC, chaired by President Marcos, said.

To avoid heat exhaustion or heat stroke, the CCC urged people to drink plenty of water.

He said Filipinos can prepare homemade electrolyte solutions using salt, citrus fruits and other easily accessible ingredients to replenish essential minerals and electrolytes lost from perspiration.

To prevent water problems during the dry and hot months, the public is encouraged to collect and store rainwater by installing a rainwater harvesting system.

"This can provide water for non-potable uses such as cleaning, flushing

the toilet and watering the plants. Rain barrels, gutters and filters can collect and store rainwater effectively," the CCC said.

The public should also make sure to seal the container of collected rainwater to prevent it from becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes, it added.

The CCC likewise recommended water-saving techniques, including reusing gray water from washing machines and showers, using a bucket instead of a hose when washing vehicles and fixing plumbing leaks promptly.

Households may also use alternative water sources in their areas, such as community wells or springs, it said.

To prevent fires and wildfires, the climate body urged the public to avoid grilling or cooking outdoors on windy days.

Furthermore, the CCC also urged households to keep fire extinguishers readily available and to create a fire safety plan, including apprising family members of evacuation routes and meeting points.

As El Niño could also bring extreme weather events including strong winds and sudden heavy downpour, the CCC instructed the public to reinforce homes by securing roofs, equipping windows with protective shutters and making sure that doors are sturdy.

It also advised individuals and households to create natural barriers by planting trees around their property that could also provide shade and contribute to sustainability.

The country is expected to sizzle in the coming weeks, with the state weather bureau predicting temperatures to reach up to 36.5 degrees Celsius nationwide and as high as 40 degrees Celsius in Metro Manila and northern Luzon due to El Niño.

Presidential Communications Assistant Secretary Joey Villarama, spokesman for Task Force El Niño, earlier said most of the provinces experiencing drought are in Luzon.

Villarama also warned at least 10 more provinces could be affected by El Niño by the end of February.

Losses

The dry spell brought by El Niño has resulted in an estimated P357.4 million in damage and production losses, according to the latest estimates by the Department of Agriculture.

In its latest El Niño bulletin, DA said 7,688 farmers have been affected in Ilocos Region, MIMAROPA, Western Visayas and Zamboanga Peninsula.

Potential production losses due to the impact of the dry spell on the affected 6,523 hectares will reach 11,480 metric tons for palay, 2,897 MT for corn and 225 MT for high value crops.

The DA said the current affected rice area of 5,011 hectares is 0.52 percent of the total target area planted, while affected corn area covered 1,263 hectares or 0.11 percent of the total target area.

Production loss for rice was pegged at 11,480 MT or around 0.12 percent of the target dry cropping season output for the year.

Corn production loss was at 2,897 MT or 0.06 percent of target production for the 2024 dry cropping season.

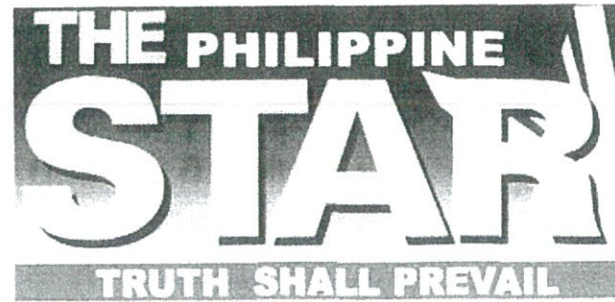
The DA said it is getting ready to distribute vegetable seeds in Western Visayas and Ilocos Regions as well as planting materials for high-value crops in the Zamboanga Peninsula to help farmers recover.

The DA is also collaborating with relevant agencies like the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical Astronomical Services Administration and the Philippine Air Force for cloud-seeding operations.

It is also promoting the use of drought-resistant crops and pest-control efforts and is continuously adopting alternate wetting-and-drying methods to reduce water consumption in rice fields.

The DA also vowed to endorse affected farmers to the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Labor and Employment to help then avail of other forms of assistance.

- Helen Flores, Romina Cabrera



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AMPLE RICE SUPPLY — A worker helps out in unloading sacks of rice from a truck on Dagupan Street in Tondo, Manila, on Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024. **Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI)** data showed that rice imports, as of Feb. 16, 2024, have reached almost 570,000 metric tons, 40 percent higher than the combined volume imported in January and February of 2023. (Arnold Quizol)



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Bacolod lifts pork ban but checkpoint stays

BY EUGENE Y. ADIONG

BACOLOD CITY: The provincial government of Negros Occidental plans to keep the checkpoints at the borders of Bacolod as the city lifts its ban on the entry of pigs and pork products.

"That will be the direction," Gov. Eugenio Jose Lacson said on Saturday, February 24.

The pronouncement of the governor comes on the heels of Joint Executive Order (EO) 1, Series of 2024, issued by Bacolod Mayor Alfredo Abelardo Benitez, lifting the ban on the entry of live pigs, pork and pork by-products to the city.

Benitez said he signed the executive order on Friday, February 23, which consists with an updated Department of Agriculture (DA) circular and in order to avert any threat of shortage of basic food necessities.

This will allow the entry of pigs

and pork products to Bacolod, even from red zones, Benitez said.

The mayor issued the Bacolod EO after he and Negros Occidental Gov. Eugenio Jose Lacson signed Joint EO 1, Series of 2024 on Friday.

It sets aside their joint EO in 2023 establishing the guidelines for the entry of pigs and pork products from areas with reported cases of African swine fever (ASF) effective immediately.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) had tagged Bacolod City as an ASF red zone and Negros Occidental as a dark green zone.

In view of the different classifi-

cations of Negros Occidental and Bacolod City, and upon the recommendation of the DA, there is a need to set aside Joint EO 1, Series of 2023, in order for the two local government units to issue their respective guidelines on the entry of live pigs, pork, pork products and other pork-related food items from areas with reported cases of ASF, the new joint EO states.

Reached for his reaction, Lacson said, "It is what Mayor Albee deems fit for the City of Bacolod."

Lacson said on Thursday that the provincial government will continue to implement its strict protocols on banning the entry of pigs and pork products into Negros Occidental.

"We will continue to follow our policy. We will continue to be strict with regards to the entry of pork products, especially from areas coded as red," he said.

As far as Negros Occidental is concerned, Lacson said that "what is important is how to recover."

"When we release our cash assistance to ASF-affected hog raisers in the province, we explain to them that they should not rush and just follow the protocol. There should be no shortcuts, because anytime we are hit again, many will suffer and will be affected. We want to return to the status as the province with the biggest backyard hog raisers," he said.

Gov. Manuel Sagabarria of neighboring Negros Oriental signed on Wednesday EO 10, lifting the ban on the transport and movement of live pigs, pork products and by-products into the province.

By reopening the province's borders to hog raisers, the governor aims to "create opportunities for businesses to flourish and contribute to a cost-effective market economy in Negros Oriental."

The decision to lift the ban comes as a welcome relief to hog raisers and consumers alike who have been grappling with the aftermath of the ASF outbreak, Sagabarria added.

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ADULT coffee white stem borer and coffee leaf rust. PHOTOS FROM L. SHYAMAL/WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

LAMP tech detects coffee plants with resistance to pest, disease

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RESearch breakthroughs can help growers screen coffee plants that can withstand coffee's major insect pest and disease, and can aid in rehabilitating devastated coffee farms.

The research has detected local varieties with resistance to coffee white stem borer (CWSB) and coffee leaf rust (CLR).

CWSB feeds on the plant, which causes yellowing and drying of branches and leaves; while CLR causes wilting and defoliation, which results in up to 50 percent loss in production.

The two-year project, "Development of a Detection System for Pest and Disease Resistance in Philippine Coffee Varieties" was led by Dr. Ernelea P. Cao of the University of the Philippines Diliman.

The project designed two detection systems that can differentiate local coffee varieties with resistance or susceptibility to CLR and CWSB using Loop-mediated Isothermal Amplification (LAMP) technology.

Through LAMP-based assays (or investigative procedures for



MONALIZA B. MAGAT (left), project staff, as she demonstrates the application of the LAMP-based assay in the detection of resistant or susceptible coffee varieties to PCAARRD-CRD Director Leilani D. Pelegrina (right). CROPS RESEARCH DIVISION, DOST-PCAARRD PHOTO

qualitatively assessing or quantitatively measuring), segments of the DNA associated with CWSB and CLR resistance taken from leaf samples are amplified, leading to the detection of resistance or susceptibility to the insect pest and disease.

The project team collaborated with the Cavite State University to validate the detection systems through CavSU's coffee gene bank and other facilities.

According to Cao, the researchers are actively working

with the **Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Plant Industry** to formulate quarantine protocols for distributing coffee planting materials.

The protocols are crucial in preventing the spread of pests in the coffee industry.

Further validation of the protocols will be explored for the development of detection kits.

The project team also conducted a workshop, "Molecular Detection Methods for Assessing Resistance/Susceptibility to

CLR and CWSB in Various Coffee Varieties."

It was attended by various government agencies, academic institutions, and private agencies. The workshop aimed to educate the participants on DNA sample preparation and LAMP assay detection methods.

The project was funded by the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-PCAARRD).

The development of the detection systems was highlighted during an annual project review conducted by the Crops Research Division (CRD) led by Director Leilani D. Pelegrina.

Also present in the activity were S&T Consultant Dr. Rita P. Laude of the University of the Los Baños and DOST-PCAARRD key representatives from CRD, Agricultural Resources Management Research Division., and the Office of the Executive Director for Research and Development.

Danica Louise C. Sembrano and Fredric M. Odejar/S&T Media Services



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CHINA, BFAR 'NAGPATINTERO' SA WEST PH SEA

Muli na namang tinangka ng China Coast Guard (CCG) na harangin ang barko ng Pilipinas na magdadala ng supply sa mga mangingisdang Pilipino sa Bajo de Masinloc sa West Philippine Sea.

Naglagay ang CCG ng bagong floating barrier sa lugar upang hindi makapasok ang barko ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) na BRP Datu Sanday nitong Sabado.

Ang barko ay may dalang diesel at mga

pagkain para sa mga mangingisdang Pilipino sa Bajo de Masinloc.

Sa drone footage ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) sa naturang insidente, isang barko ng CCG at isang Chinese maritime militia ang humarang sa BRP Datu Sanday.

Umatras pa umano ang barko ng CCG ng tatlong beses para maharang ang BFAR vessel kaya niradyuhan na nila ito.

Kasunod nito, nagpalipad ng helicopter

ang Chinese Navy upang manmanan ang ginawa ng barko ng BFAR sa mga mangingisdang Pilipino sa lugar.

Pinalipad naman ng BFAR ang Cessna plane upang imonitor ang harassment ng CCG.

Ayon sa PCG, nakalusot pa rin ang barko ng BFAR sa kabila ng harassment ng CCG at matagumpay na naibigay ang ayuda sa 44 "mother fishing boats" sa Bajo de Masinloc.

Umangkla ang BRP

Datu Sanday, 200 metro ang layo mula sa baybayin ng Bajo de Masinloc pero nagpadala naman ng rubber boat ang CCG upang bantayan ang barko ng Pilipinas.

Matatandaang ipinag-utos ni Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. na magsagawa ng rotational deployment ang PCG at BFAR upang maprotektahana ng mga mangingisdang Pilipinas sa Bajo de Masinloc. (Juliet de Loza-Cudia)



DA-BPI itinanggi smuggled sibuyas mula Holland

ITINANGGI ng Bureau of Plant and Industry ng Department of Agriculture nitong Sabado ang mga alegasyon na bumaha ng smuggled sibuyas mula Holland ang pamilihan sa Cagayan de Oro City.

Nanindigan ang BPI na ang mga binebentang sibuyas sa Cagayan de Oro City ay nanggaling sa Luzon at ibang bansa at hindi Holland.

Sinabi ni officer-in-charge at BPI Region 10 Manager Arnold dela Cruz Jr., base sa isinagawang imbestigasyon at market monitoring ng iba't ibang opisina ng DA, walang katotohanan na kaya bumaba ang presyo ng sibuyas ay dahil sa pagbaha ng mga smuggled sibuyas.

Sa isinagawang monitoring ng BPI, ang wholesale price ng pulang sibuyas ay naglalaro sa P50 hanggang P65 bawat kilo, habang ang imported na puting sibuyas ay P65 hanggang P70



per kilo.

Samantala, ang retail price naman ng lokal na pulang sibuyas ay P90 hanggang P170, ang imported ay P100, habang ang imported na puting sibuyas ay P90 hanggang P180 per kilo.

Noong Enero, ang farm gate price ng sibuyas sa Luzon, ay naglalaro sa P35 hanggang P55.

Kinumpirma naman ng BPI na base sa datos ng Plant Quarantine Office, 307.1 metric tons ng lokal na pulang sibuyas at 17.6 tonelada ng imported na puting sibuyas ang dumating sa pantalan at airport ng CDO noong Enero at 302.8 tonelada ng pulang sibuyas naman nitong Pebrero.

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Taiwan offers farm internship

TAIWAN'S internship program for young Filipino farmers will open application for another batch in June, the Taipei Economic and Cultural Office (TECO) in Manila announced Saturday.

TECO said the applications received from the previous Filipino Young Farmer Internship Program in Taiwan (FYFIPT) are "currently under review."

The FYFIPT is a joint effort of TECO and the Manila Economic and Cultural Office (MECO) in collaboration with the Philippine Agricultural Training Institute of the Department of Agriculture (DA-ATI) since 2021.

The program aims to empower young Filipino farmers to become farmer leaders and agricultural entrepreneurs by intensive exposures to unlearn, learn, and re-learn techniques, technologies, and strategies through internships in Tai-

wan.

To date, a total of 126 young farmers from the Philippines are training under the FYFIPT and have been accommodated by more than 30 farms in Taiwan for an 11-month hands-on internship.

Interns were assigned to different host farms according to their preference of commodity, such as rice, fruits, vegetables, dairy, swine, poultry, mushroom, and aquaculture.

FYFIP participants are awarded a P50,000 grant by DA-ATI upon their completion of the program to assist their re-entry into the agricultural sectors in the Philippines.

This year, TECO said, Taiwan would increase the internship vacancies from 50 to 100 to accommodate the increasing Filipino applicants.

"I am glad to see many

young faces who are interested in agriculture. I encourage the students who are interested in FYFIPT to apply for internship opportunity," TECO Philippines Representative Wallace Chow said.

"This year, Taiwan government provides FYFIPT internship opportunities to 100 Filipino young farmers."

Apart from the FYFIPT, Taiwan also provides various scholarships to interested Filipinos students, such as the Taiwan International Cooperation & Development Fund Scholarship, the Taiwan Ministry of Education Scholarship, and the Huayu Enrichment Scholarship for Mandarin language course.

Application for the ICDF scholarship is open until March 15 while submission for the rest is until April 30.

PNA



Negros Occidental lifts ban on hogs, pork products

BACOLOD CITY – A ban on the entry of hogs and pork products in Negros Occidental has been lifted.

Gov. Eugenio Jose Lacson and Bacolod City Mayor Alfredo Abelardo Benitez signed a joint executive order on Friday setting aside a joint EO they issued in 2023, which set the guidelines for the entry of pigs and pork products from areas with reported cases of African swine fever (ASF).

This city has been classified under red or infected zone while Negros Occidental is under dark

green or free from ASF.

The provincial veterinary office said it has not recorded hog deaths due to ASF or hog cholera since September last year.

The provincial government said it has distributed financial assistance worth P10 million to affected farmers.

At least 17,766 hogs have died due to swine diseases in Negros Occidental, with losses estimated at P200 million.

Up to 4,259 hog raisers in 153 barangays in Negros Occidental were affected.

Negros Occidental has a P6-billion swine industry and is among the top exporters of pork products in the country.

On Wednesday, Negros Oriental Gov. Chaco Sagarbarria signed an EO opening the borders of the province to hog raisers and traders in a bid to revive the pork industry in their area.

The hog ban in Negros Occidental was implemented in 2022 due to the threat of ASF.

Negros Oriental imposed the ban in March last year.

– Gilbert Bayoran



MINDANAO FLOODS, LANDSLIDES:

Agri, infra damage hits P3.6 B

By JOSE RODEL CLAPANO

Damage to infrastructure and agriculture due to flooding and landslides in Davao and Caraga has reached more than P3.6 billion.

Heavy rainfall spawned by the northeast monsoon and trough of a low-pressure area battered the two regions since early this month.

In its situational report as of 8 a.m. yesterday, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said damage to infrastructure was estimated at P2.62 billion.

At least 278 infrastructure facilities and nearly 5,000 houses were damaged.

The NDRRMC report said losses in the agriculture sector were estimated at more than P1 billion, with 25,010 hectares of agricultural land affected.

Damage to livestock, poultry and fisheries was estimated at P7.4 million. At least 19,071 farmers and fisherfolk were affected.

Up to 471,819 families or more than

1.5 million people were affected by the weather systems, 59,310 of them preemptively evacuated.

The NDRRMC said 188,656 people were displaced. The government said it had set up 63 evacuation centers.

The government has so far provided P267.3 million in assistance to affected residents.

In Maco, Davao de Oro, 98 people were confirmed dead while eight remain missing in a landslide that occurred in Barangay Masara on Feb. 6.

Mayor Arthur Carlos Voltaire Rimando ordered the suspension of search and retrieval operations on Thursday after the incident management team reported the completion of retrieval and debris clearing at ground zero of the landslide.



PBBM supports value-added nutrition in rice, other agri products

By RAYMUND ANTONIO

The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) has the full support of President Marcos in developing varieties of rice, corn, potatoes, and other agricultural products with additional nutritional values.

The Presidential Communications Office (PCO) stated that the IRRI is in the process of developing rice varieties and other agricultural products, such as corn, potatoes, chicken, and vegetables that have additional nutritional components—protein, vitamin A, iron, and zinc, among others.

“It’s no longer just food sufficiency. There should be nutritional value given to the people. There’s very much that we could learn from (you). IRRI has been actually continuing the research and development and when we went I could see some of their

rice is made not for the Philippines alone, the varieties are going all over the world,” the Chief Executive said.

Marcos gave this assessment during the recent courtesy call of officials of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and IRRI in Malacañang, where the President was told of the varieties of rice that IRRI is rolling out that would complement the nutritional requirement of every person.

One such variety is the low glycemic index (GI), protein-enriched rice that aims to boost the nutritional value requirements of Filipinos.

“It’s beyond (the issue of) food and rice in Asian countries. So, again, that just brings into very sharp focus how important (rice) is to us. But the other side of it is the nutrition side because of course, we cannot eat just rice. So, there has to be a source of vegetable, and protein. So that’s why

we are now trying to find the [solution],” Marcos said.

When IRRI officials offered to develop more varieties of rice and other agricultural produce for local consumption, the President stressed that “we can make use of that because those are the kinds of things that we need.”

During the courtesy call, CGIAR Executive Managing Director Dr. Ismahane Elouafi expressed her organization’s desire to work with the Philippine government in producing different varieties of agricultural products.

“In IRRI we have lot of new technologies and better productivity and nutrition. We have the same in other commodities. Now we have iron-rich potatoes. If you eat the potatoes, it give you about 50 percent of iron that you need per day. And anemia problem is a huge problem in the world partic-

ularly in women and kids,” she said.

“We have same thing in maize (corn). We have the high protein, Vitamin A in rice, in maize, we have beans with iron and zinc both of them.”

CGIAR is a global network of 15 research centers that generate and disseminate knowledge, technologies, and policies for agricultural development through close collaboration with hundreds of partner organizations, including national and regional research institutes, civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector.

IRRI, on the other hand, was established during the time of Marcos’ father, former president Ferdinand E. Marcos, and is placed under CGIAR.

Elouafi was accompanied by IRRI officials—Dr. Cao Duc Phat, chairperson of the Board of Trustees; Dr. Ajay Kohil, interim director; and

Joanna Kane Potaka, deputy director general for strategy, engagement, and impact.

In the meeting, the President also mentioned how the project can contribute to the Department of Social Welfare and Development’s (DSWD) Food Stamp Program because it aims not only to provide food to the poorest families, but also ensure that they have access to nutritious food.

He expressed hope that the food stamp program can also be a part of IRRI’s plans.

“If you take six units of carbohydrates, you cannot take anymore. you have to take also protein and you have to take also legumes and vegetable so that it is balanced, especially to children. It’s very important. I hope it can be part in this (IRRI) program,” he said.

The “Walang Gutom 2027: Food Stamp Program” is a flagship program of the Marcos administration. It provides low-income households monetary-based assistance through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards that can be used in purchasing select food commodities from eligible partner merchant stores.



SUNDAY FEATURE

Rice price shocks more impact on second-round effects – BSP

By LEE C. CHIPONGIAN

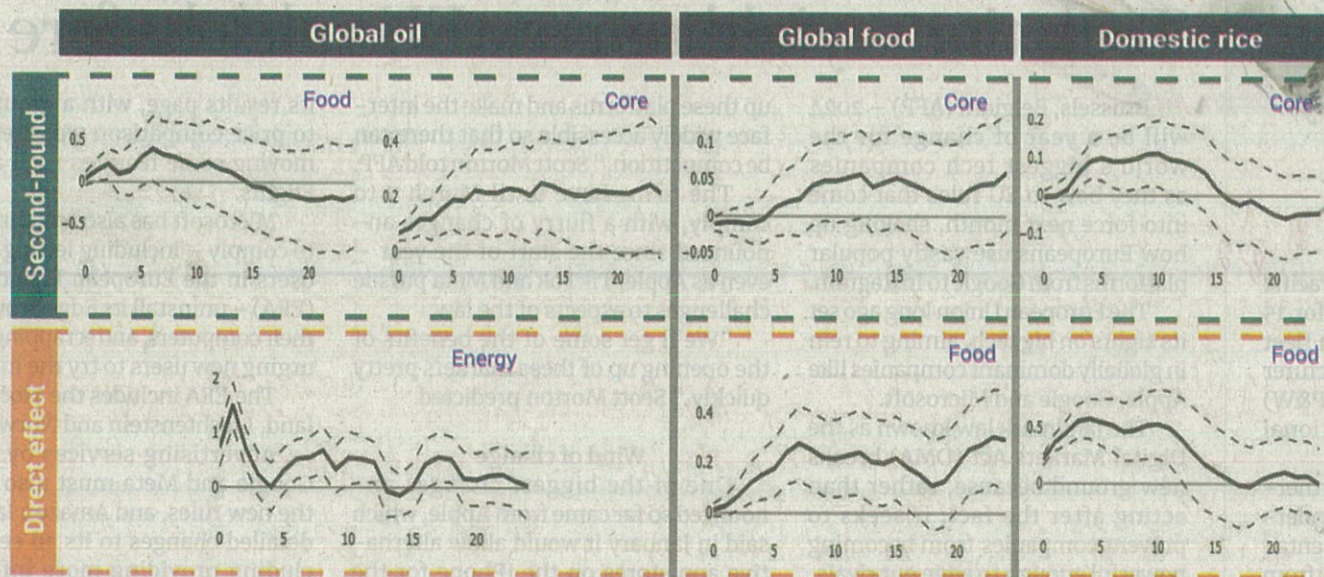
The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), which has been adopting an inflation-targeting framework since 2002 and is mandated to preserve the country's price stability at all times, said rice price shocks have larger persistent impact on supply-side pressures and second-round effects compared to oil.

Second-round or second-order effects are also called indirect effects and are manifested as wage hikes and transport fare increases.

However, based on the BSP's latest inflation assessment, oil price shocks have a direct effect on the market's inflation expectations which is crucial in how BSP decides its monetary policy stance.

In the review, part of the February 2024 Monetary Policy Report (MPR), the BSP estimated the direct and second-round effects of shocks to global oil, global food, and domestic rice prices on various measures of inflation as well as inflation

Impulse responses of inflation measures to select supply shocks



Source: BSP

(MB-file photo)

expectations.

In the case of oil price shocks, the direct effect is defined as the impact on energy inflation while the second-round effect is the weighted impact on core and food inflation. As for food shocks, the BSP noted that the direct effect is the impact on



Rice price shocks...

food inflation while the second-round effect is the impact of the shock on core inflation.

According to the BSP review, "compared with the impact of oil price shocks, the impact of domestic rice price shocks has larger direct effects on headline inflation relative to the contribution of second-round effects."

It also estimated the direct effects of rice price shocks on headline inflation which it said "are aligned with the actual contribution of rice prices."

"The larger direct impact can be attributed to the significant share of rice in the CPI (consumer price index) basket and its limited role in the production of other goods and services," it added.

Furthermore, the BSP explained that when matched with known rice price shock episodes, the positive direct and second-round effects are observed in the latter part of the low rice inventory episode such as during the period 2013 to 2014 and the delays in rice imports in late 2018. "(The) negative direct and second-round effects appeared months following the

enactment of the rice tariffication law and continued well into the pandemic," said the BSP.

Persistent, successive supply shocks

A country has price stability when there is low and stable inflation. In doing what it is supposed to do, which is striking a balance between money, banking and credit, the BSP is ensuring the economy has the momentum to expand.

But then the Philippines have had successive supply shocks from 2021 to 2023 and these became upward price pressures to the inflation path.

The BSP said that given the large swings in oil and food prices of the last two years, it has been constructing data and assessing how these price changes affect domestic inflation, including the indirect or second-round effects.

In its review, the BSP noted that a 10-percent hike in Dubai crude oil prices actually leads to second-round effects that are smaller than the direct effects but are longer-lasting. "This combined impact on core and non-core food inflation builds and persists

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for 18 months and, at its peak, reaches 0.28 ppt (percentage point) on the 13th month. The combined direct and second-round effects of global oil price shocks on headline inflation last for a year and reach a peak of 0.40 ppt on the 11th month," said the BSP.

Meanwhile, the central bank emphasized that a one percent increase in global food inflation will have "a significant and persistent direct impact" on non-core food inflation "but minimal second-round effects with the impact on core inflation being insignificant over the horizon."

BSP said that this was a weak pass-through that could indicate that the global food price index is not adequately capturing the domestic price movements. Rice prices only account for 2.2 percent of the food basket used by the International Monetary Fund index while the Philippines' domestic CPI basket attach a significantly higher weight at 8.9 percent share.

"The impact of a one percent increase in domestic rice prices leads to significant second-round effects that appear by the third month and persist for a year with a peak of 0.11 ppt on the 10th month. The significant indirect effect as well as the larger direct effect is due to the importance of rice in the

Filipino food basket," said the BSP.

On the other hand, gasoline and diesel prices account for only 2.4 percent of the CPI basket while items affected by higher oil prices such as transport services have higher CPI weights, said the BSP. Thus, the direct effects of oil price shocks on headline inflation "are observed to align with the actual changes in Dubai crude oil prices and the actual contribution of gasoline and diesel prices."

Inflation expectations

As for inflation expectations as measured by the month-ahead inflation forecasts of private sector economists, the BSP noted that this "appear to respond asymmetrically towards price shocks coming from global food and Dubai crude oil."

"Comparing shocks of the same magnitude, positive price shocks tend to raise inflation expectations more than negative price shocks tend to decrease inflation expectations. Additionally, the median response of inflation expectations towards a positive price shock tends to be slightly higher, possibly indicating that expectations are stickier in the face of downward price adjustments. In the case of domestic rice price shocks, positive price

shocks trigger an increase in inflation expectations that is more dispersed, possibly indicating higher uncertainty," the BSP explained.

In a recent survey called the BSP Survey of External Forecasters, economists still see inflation ending below four percent this year at 3.9 percent, but raised its projection for 2025 to 3.5 percent from the previous estimate of 3.4 percent. Both forecasts are within the BSP's two percent to four percent inflation target band.

The results of the survey mirror the BSP's risk-adjusted inflation forecast for 2024, of 3.9 percent and 3.5 percent for 2025. The BSP announced the latest forecasts on Feb. 15, when it also announced an unchanged benchmark rate of 6.5 percent after its first policy meeting for the year.

The BSP said risks to the inflation outlook are still persistently on the upside such as higher transport charges; increased electricity rates; higher oil and domestic food prices; and the additional impact on food prices of a strong El Niño episode.

However, BSP officials also noted that the recent agreement with Vietnam to secure rice supply for the country in the next five years is encouraging and will impact on rice prices.

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Tolentino: Unibersidad, gobyerno, industriya magtulungan sa pag-unlad ng agrikultura

Nais ni Sen. Francis "Tol" Tolentino na ang pag-unlad ay kasangkutan ng mga unibersidad, gobyerno, at industriya upang mapaunlad ang agrikultura sa bansa.

Sinabi ni Tolentino na ang diskarte sa pagsasama ng tatlong institusyon na tinatawag na triple helix aniya ay epektibong gumagana sa pag-unlad ng agrikultura sa Netherlands at Germany. Ito ay kalakaran na maaaring magkonekta sa bagong henerasyon sa industriya ng agrikultura.

Sa kasalukuyan, nasa 55-59 taong gulang ang karaniwang edad ng mga Pilipinong magsasaka -- nagpapakita ng kawalang partisipasyon ng mga nakababatang henerasyon sa produksyon ng agrikultura sa bansa.

Ani Tolentino, ang mga mag-aaral mula sa mga unibersidad ay maaaring magsagawa ng pagsusuri sa lupa, halimbawa ang paglalapat ng mga inobasyon na maaaring magbigay-daan upang isara ang puwang

sa pagkuha ng mga karera sa agrikultura at pangisdaan.

Sinabi ni Tolentino na ang aplikasyon ay dapat case-to-case basis, tulad sa Central Luzon, kung saan nangingibabaw ang agrikultura, o pangisdaan sa mga lugar tulad ng Aklan at Zamboanga Peninsula.

Inamin ni Agriculture Undersecretary for Planning Asis Perez na iniwasan ng nakababatang henerasyon ang produksyon ng agrikultura dahil sa mababang kita at pagtaas ng insidente ng kahirapan sa sektor at pagkakaroon ng mga opsyon tulad ng trabaho sa mga pabrika at trabaho sa ibang bansa.

Sinabi ni Perez na nagbago na ang panahon, kung saan dati, ang isang pamilya na may dalawang ektaryang lupang pang-agrikultura ay maaaring mamuhay nang disente pero nawala at nauwi ang pagsasaka sa hindi kapakinabang.

Pilipino Star
NGAYON
Diyaryong disente ng masang intelihente

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Ang mga sako ng bigas na idinidiskarga para ilipat sa warehouse sa Dagupan Street sa Tondo Manila, kahapon. Tinatayang umaabot sa 570,000 metrikong tonelada ng bigas ang na-import nitong kalagitnaan ng Pebrero. Karamihan sa mga ipinasok na bigas ay buhat Vietnam, sumunod ang buhat sa Thailand at Pakistan. (Kuha ni Ernie Peñaredondo)



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Brace against El Niño – Climate Change body

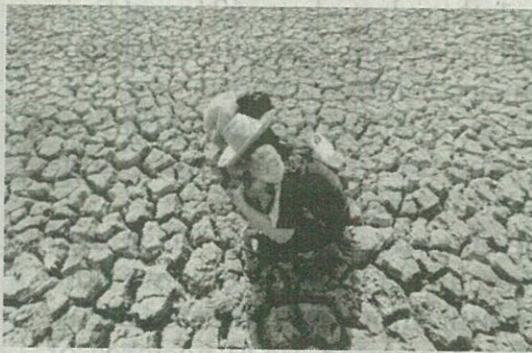
THE Climate Change Commission (CCC) urged Filipinos to take proactive measures following the forecast of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration's (PAGASA) of an increased El Niño activity.

PAGASA has warned of a strong El Niño activity this month, while most global climate models foresee the phenomenon to persist from March to May.

In light of this forecast, the CCC encouraged taking the necessary steps to minimize the negative impacts of El Niño in their homes and communities.

The CCC, in cooperation with other national government agencies, has developed policies and strategies that will prepare the nation for climate change impacts and disasters. These include:

--The National Climate



Change Action Plan (NCCAP), which outlines strategies for building resilience to climate change impacts, including El Niño. It calls for improved water resource management, early warnings systems, and climate-smart agriculture practices.

--The Local Climate Change Action Plans (LCCAPs). Developed by local governments, the LCCAPs provide context-specific adaptation measures tailored to local vul-

nerabilities. Integrating El Niño preparedness into LCCAPs ensures targeted and effective action.

--The National Framework Strategy on Climate Change (NFSCC), which guides the country's long-term response to climate change. It underscores the importance of mainstreaming climate considerations into all development plans, including disaster risk reduction and management.

--The National Climate

Risk Management Framework (NCRMF), which outlines a systematic approach to managing climate risks, including those associated with El Niño. Implementing its recommendations strengthens preparedness and response capacity.

"Implementing the strategies and recommendations outlined in these policies and frameworks strengthens our adaptive capacity to face climate risks such as El Niño, ultimately leading to more climate-resilient communities," CCC vice chairperson and executive director Robert E.A. Borje said in a news release on Friday.

The PAGASA has announced the possibility of an increase in the number of provinces to be affected by the El Niño phenomenon from 41 provinces in January to 51 by the end of February.



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IRRI rolls out low GI, protein enriched rice

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Friday hailed the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) for its development of a low glycemic index (GI), protein-enriched rice variety that he said would boost the nutritional value requirements of every Filipino.

During the courtesy call of officials of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) and IRRI in Malacanang, the President was told of the varieties of rice that IRRI is rolling out that would complement the nutritional requirement of every person.

The President pointed out that the development of a low GI, protein-enriched rice variety which is being rolled out by IRRI is aligned with his initiative of not only ensuring food sufficiency but making sure that food given to Filipinos are nutritious.

"It's no longer just food sufficiency. There should be nutritional value given to the people. There's very much that we could learn from (you). IRRI has been actually continuing the research and development and when we went I could see some of their rice is made not for the Philippines alone, the varieties



are going all over the world," President Marcos said.

During the courtesy call, Dr. Ismahane Elouafi, Executive Managing Director of CGIAR, said her organization is very much willing to work with the Philippine government for the development of not only rice varieties that have additional nutritional components but other agricultural products such as corn, potatoes, chicken and vegetables.

"In IRRI we have lot of new technologies and better productivity and nutrition. We have the same in other commodities. Now we have iron-rich pota-

atoes. If you eat the potatoes, it give you about 50 percent of iron that you need per day. And anemia problem is a huge problem in the world particularly in women and kids. We have same thing in maize (corn). We have the high protein, Vitamin A in rice, in maize, we have beans with iron and zinc both of them," Elouafi said.

CGIAR is a global network of 15 research centers that generate and disseminate knowledge, technologies, and policies for agricultural development through close collaboration with hundreds of partner organizations, including nation-

al and regional research institutes, civil society organizations, academia, and the private sector. IRRI, established during the time of former President Ferdinand E. Marcos, is under CGIAR.

Elouafi was accompanied by IRRI officials namely, Dr. Cao Duc Phat, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees, Dr. Ajay Kohil, Interim Director and Joanna Kane Potaka, Deputy Director General for Strategy, Engagement and Impact.

President Marcos mentioned the Food Stamp Program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) that is aimed at not just providing food to the poorest families but also ensuring that what they are provided are nutritious.

The "Walang Gutom 2027: Food Stamp Program" is a flagship program of President Marcos which aims to decrease the incidence of voluntary hunger experienced by low-income households by providing monetary-based assistance through Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) cards that can be used in purchasing select food commodities from eligible partner merchant stores. **PCO**