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MANILA BULLETIN:

Bicol solon urges PBBM to show aggressive stand on West PH Sea

BY NINO N. LUCES

Jul 7, 2024 01:49 PM

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay – Ako Bicol party-list Rep. Raul Angelo "Jil" Bongalon said on Saturday, July 6, that President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. should show an aggressive stand on the West Philippine Sea (WPS) and address the status of education in the country during his State-of-the-Nation Address (SONA) on July 22.



PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. (left).

"Dapat magkaroon siya ng aggressive stand with regards to the West Philippine Sea. Hindi na po maganda ang nangyayari sa ating bansa, lalong lalo na ang ating mga opisyal sa Coast Guard, miyembro ng ating enforcement agency, the Philippine Army and the Navy, mga masalimuot po ang nangyayari. The point na meron na pong kawani na naputulan ng kamay at patuloy pa rin yung pambu-bully (The President should have an aggressive stand on the West Philippine Sea. I am concerned on what is happening to our country, particularly the Coast Guard, enforcement agencies, the Army, the Navy, to the point that we had one personnel who was injured and the bullying continues)," said Bongalon during the Tarabangan Caravan of Ako Bicol party-list in Barangay Sogod, Tiwi, Albay.

"Of course, the President also has to address the status of our education. Dahil nga sa mga mababang ranking ng ating bansa with regards to the major subjects (Our country has a low ranking with regards to major subjects)," he added.

Aside from the two major issues, Bongalon also said that the President should deliver a decisive statement on the nation's present situation, especially on agriculture.

"Alam mo ang ating administrasyon ay umiikot ngayon sa iba't-ibang lugar sa ating bansa. So kanyang pag-iikot, he has to say something. Ano ang kanyang observation, kumusta ang estado ng ating agrikultura, because as promised, sinasabi niya na papababain ang presyo ng ating bigas (The administration is going around the country and the President has to say something. What does he see, what is the state of our agriculture, because he promised to lower the price of rice)," he said.

"So with this, sana magkaroon tayo ng decisive statement from our President on how to realize, ang alam ko meron na pong plano ang Department of Agriculture with that. So para malaman po ng taumbayan na yung sinabi niya noong mga nakaraang taon ay ginagawa at talagang aabutin natin yung presyo na kanyang primomesa (We hope to have a decisive statement on how to realize and I know that the Department of Agriculture has a plan on that. The people should know that what he promised last year is being fulfilled and that the price he promised (P20 per kilo) rice will be achieved)."

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/7/bicol-solon-urges-pbbm-to-show-aggressive-stand-on-west-ph-sea>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Government subsidies to GOCCs jump 31% in May

BY XANDER DAVE CEBALLOS

Jul 7, 2024 07:23 PM

The government raised its budgetary support to state-run firms by 31 percent to P9.7 billion in May, with the bulk of the subsidies intended to support the agriculture sector.

Data from the Bureau of the Treasury showed subsidies to government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) in May increased to P9.74 billion from P7.39 billion in the same period last year.

During the month, budgetary support for major non-financial government corporations reached P7.55 billion, up by 37 percent.

Likewise, subsidies for other government corporations increased 26 percent to P2.08 billion from P1.65 billion a year ago.

The most significant chunk of the subsidy went to the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), with P7.27 billion, accounting for about 75 percent of the total subsidy disbursements.

From January to May, NIA, which is tasked with the development of the country's irrigation system, received a total of P29.01 billion in subsidies from the national government, significantly higher compared to P18.28 billion in the same period.

President Marcos earlier tasked agencies, including the NIA, with identifying and studying irrigation assets in the country so that local farmers can utilize them.

The Philippine Rice Research Institute secured the second-highest subsidy, P629 million, while the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority came in third with P359 million.

Other top subsidy recipients during the month also include the health sector through the Philippine Children's Medical Center, Philippine Heart Center, and National Kidney and Transplant Institute.

During the month, no subsidy was released to the National Electrification Administration, Local Water Utilities Administration, National Housing Authority, National Food Authority, Philippine Postal Corp., Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation, and Tourism Infrastructure & Enterprise Zone Authority

For the first five months of the year, subsidies went up 52 percent to P57.05 billion from P37.65 billion a year ago.

Budgetary support for major non-financial government corporations reached P38.53 billion in the first five months, up 53 percent, while subsidies for other government corporations also increased by 30 percent to P15.83 billion.

In May, the government reverted to a budget deficit of P174.9 billion, albeit at a slower pace, after the increase in state expenditures outpaced the growth in revenue collection.

During the month, overall government expenditures moved by 22 percent to P557 billion compared to May 2023.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/7/7/government-subsidies-to-goc-cs-jump-31-in-may>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

PH aiming for rice self-sufficiency by 2028 – Romualdez

By: [Faith Argosino](#) - Reporter / [@FArgosinoINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 02:37 PM July 07, 2024



RICE COMPOSITE IMAGE from Inquirer file and stock photos

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines is working to attain rice self-sufficiency by 2028, according to House Speaker Martin Romualdez.

Romualdez said the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) have started efforts to achieve this goal, including constructing irrigation systems.

“We are doing an all-of-government approach, so DA, NIA (National Irrigation Administration), NFA (National Food Authority), and the executive and legislative will join forces,” he said on Sunday.

“The DPWH will construct CIS (Comprehensive Irrigation Systems) interconnected to impound water, so that there will be flood control and water for the drinking and reservoir,” he added in Filipino.

Leyte’s 1st district representative said this move would also help the country not depend on rice importation and lower the rice prices.

“We should also prepare a long-term plan to no longer be dependent on rice imports before he (President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.) steps down. Rice self-sufficiency is essential. So, our rice fields need to be more efficient; we need irrigation and a lot more irrigation,” Romualdez added.

Marcos ordered a tariff cut on rice and other select products last month. According to the Palace, Executive Order (EO) No. 62 will cut the rice levy from 35 percent to 15 percent.

“The implementation of an updated comprehensive tariff schedule aims to augment supply, manage prices, and temper inflationary pressure of various commodities, consistent with the Philippine national interest and the objective of safeguarding the purchasing power of Filipinos,” Marcos explained in EO 62.

Agricultural groups, however, filed a petition asking the Supreme Court to nullify EO 62, saying that it was hastily issued without consultation, investigation, and hearing, which are required under Republic Act 10863 or the Flexible Clause of Customs Modernization and Tariff Act.

Among the petitioners were Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura Inc., the Federation of Free Farmers Inc., United Broiler Raisers Assn. 1 Inc., Sorosoro Ibaba Development Cooperative, and Magsasaka Partylist Rep. Argel Cabatbat.

They pointed out that reducing tariffs on staple products such as corn “poses significant challenges for local farmers” and “can lead to an influx of cheaper imported goods, undermining domestic producers’ and farmers’ sales and products.”

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1958763/ph-aiming-for-rice-self-sufficiency-by-2028-romualdez>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DA readies P510.4M subsidies to farmers

By: [Jordeene B. Lagare](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:28 AM July 07, 2024



Inquirer files

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture (DA) is set to distribute P510.447 million in fuel subsidies to farmers this month to alleviate the financial burden caused by higher fuel prices.

In a statement over the weekend, the DA said the financial assistance of P3,000 each will be distributed to approximately 160,000 farmers who own or rent machinery used in crop, livestock and poultry production.

“This development indicates that the distribution of the fuel subsidy could commence later in July,” it said.

The fuel subsidy grant is activated upon the Department of Energy’s certification that the average monthly price of Dubai crude reaches or exceeds \$80 per barrel based on the Mean of Platts Singapore (Mops).

Mops is the daily average of all trading transactions of petroleum products in the Singapore trading hub. It serves as the regional benchmark used in the Philippines and countries in Southeast Asia in pricing fuel products.

Last Tuesday, the price of gasoline rose by 95 centavos per liter, diesel by 65 centavos per liter and kerosene by 35 centavos per liter.

Food security goal

To receive a one-time cash aid from the agency, eligible farmers should be registered in the Registry System for Basic Sectors of Agriculture and own or rent farm machinery or equipment.

The DA will provide the fuel subsidies through the Bureau of Agricultural and Fisheries Engineering and its regional field offices. It will be funded by the DA's budget allocation under the 2024 General Appropriations Act.

The Development Bank of the Philippines and its financial technology partners will provide cash cards for the fuel subsidy project.

“This is just one of the several assistance projects that the Marcos administration provides to ease the burden of our farmers, the unsung heroes of our economy and the main pillar of our food security goal,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1958624/da-readies-p510-4m-subsidies-to-farmers>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Affordable ‘Rice-for-All’ available soon, says DA

By: [Dianne Sampang](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 03:24 AM July 07, 2024



Photos by Marianne Bermudez

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Agriculture announced that it will implement ‘Rice-for-All’, a program that offers affordable rice to all Filipinos.

Shortly after the rollout of P29 rice program to 10 Kadiwa stores across Metro Manila and Bulacan on Friday, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Genevieve Guevarra said Saturday in a news forum that the ‘Rice-for-All’ program will sell rice ranging from P45 to P48 in the coming weeks.

“Our ‘Rice-for-All program is in the works where rice will be sold at a cheaper price than the prevailing market prices,” Guevarra said.

Guevarra also expressed that it will be available for everyone to purchase.

“This is for everyone, and not just for the vulnerable sector. So, anyone can buy and there is no limit. Although let’s say that if there are 25 sacks, they can purchase one sack,” she added.

The new rice program will be launched in Kadiwa centers first before it becomes available in other areas.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1958554/affordable-rice-for-all-available-soon-says-da>

MANILA STANDARD

House leader joins Speaker in supporting admin's P29/kilo rice program



INEXPENSIVE RICE. A resident buys rice for P29 per kilo at the Bigas 29 program in the Kadiwa Center at the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) in Malate, Manila on Saturday. The Bigas 29 program, run by the NFA Council, aims to provide affordable rice for select beneficiaries. Danny Pata

A House leader has joined Speaker Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez in supporting President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.'s P29 Rice Program, which aims to provide affordable rice to Filipino families amid rising global food prices.

“This program is essential to help our fellow Filipinos, especially during these challenging times. It shows the administration’s dedication to ensuring every family has access to affordable and nutritious food,” said Deputy Speaker David Suarez, who represents the second district of Quezon province in Congress.

Romualdez, dubbed as “Mr. Rice” for his nationwide rice distribution efforts to reduce the staple’s cost, had earlier hailed the P29 Rice Program as a testament to President Marcos’ commitment to tackling inflation and enhancing food security.

Romualdez said that “offering rice at P29 per kilo to our most vulnerable citizens is a vital step in reducing hunger and improving the quality of life for millions of Filipinos.”

The program, which launched its trial on Friday, operates in 10 locations across Metro Manila and Bulacan. It offers rice at P29 per kilogram to vulnerable groups, including members of the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), senior citizens, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and solo parents.

Beneficiaries can purchase subsidized rice every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, with a limit of 10 kilos per household each month. Each trial site is expected to support around 60,000 households monthly.

According to Suarez, the P29 Rice Program is a game-changer for the agricultural sector. “This noble initiative only helps families put food on the table but also supports our local farmers by increasing demand for their produce,” Suarez said.

Suarez also welcomed the Speaker’s assurance of continued government support for local farmers, citing the availability of around ₱22 billion under the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

“Our farmers are the backbone of our food supply. Ensuring they have the support and resources they need is crucial,” Suarez said.

“The RCEF provides much-needed assistance to boost productivity and sustainability,” he added.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314468468/house-leader-joins-speaker-in-supporting-admins-p29-kilo-rice-program.html>

Kenya's farmers grapple with devastating floods, food insecurity as climate change wreaks havoc

BusinessMirror

July 7, 2024

MACHAKOS, Kenya—With dismay, Martha Waema and her husband surveyed their farm that was submerged by weeks of relentless rainfall across Kenya. Water levels would rise to shoulder height after only a night of heavy downpour.

The couple had expected a return of 200,000 shillings (\$1,500) from their three acres after investing 80,000 shillings (\$613) in maize, peas, cabbages, tomatoes and kale. But their hopes have been uprooted and destroyed.

“I have been farming for 38 years, but I have never encountered losses of this magnitude,” said the 62-year-old mother of 10. Their financial security and optimism have been shaken by what Kenya’s government has called “a clear manifestation of the erratic weather patterns caused by climate change.”

The rains that started in mid-March have posed immediate dangers and left others to come. They have killed nearly 300 people, left dams at historically high levels and led the government to order residents to evacuate flood-prone areas—and bulldoze the homes of those who don’t.

Now a food security crisis lies ahead, along with even higher prices in a country whose president had sought to make agriculture an even greater engine of the economy.

Kenya’s government says the flooding has destroyed crops on more than 168,000 acres (67,987 hectares) of land, or less than 1 percent of Kenya’s agricultural land.

As farmers count their losses—a total yet unknown—the deluge has exposed what opposition politicians call Kenya’s ill preparedness for climate change and related

disasters and the need for sustainable land management and better weather forecasting.

Waema now digs trenches in an effort to protect what's left of the farm on a plain in the farthest outskirts of the capital, Nairobi, in Machakos County.

Not everyone is grieving, including farmers who prepared for climate shocks.

About 200 kilometers (125 miles) west of Waema's farm, 65-year-old farmer James Tobiko Tipis and his 16-acre farm have escaped the flooding in Olokirikirai. He said he had been proactive in the area that's prone to landslides by terracing crops.

"We used to lose topsoil and whatever we were planting," he said.

Experts said more Kenyan farmers must protect their farms against soil erosion that likely will be worsened by further climate shocks.

Jane Kirui, an agricultural officer in Narok County, emphasized the importance of terracing and other measures such as cover crops that will allow water to be absorbed.

In Kenya's rural areas, experts say efforts to conserve water resources remain inadequate despite the current plentiful rainfall.

At Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology, professor John Gathenya recommended practices such as diversifying crops and emphasizing the soil's natural water retention capacity.

"The soil remains the biggest reservoir for water," he said, asserting that using it wisely requires much less of an investment than large infrastructure projects such as dams. But soil needs to be protected with practices that include limiting the deforestation that has exposed parts of Kenyan land to severe runoff.

"We are opening land in new fragile environments where we need to be even more careful the way we farm," Gathenya said. "In our pursuit for more and more food, we are pressing into the more fragile areas but not with the same intensity of soil conservation that we had 50 years back."

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/07/07/kenyas-farmers-grapple-with-devastating-floods-food-insecurity-as-climate-change-wreaks-havoc/>

Imported agricultural products, sasalain – DA

[Angie dela Cruz](#)

July 7, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Sasalain na ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang mga produktong magmumula sa ibang mga bansa upang maiwasan ang pagpasok ng mga may sakit na hayop at makilatis ang iba pang agricultural products na maaaring mapakinabangan ng mamamayan.

Ayon kay Agriculture secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., plano nilang simulan ang operasyon sa mga first border control facility para sa mga imported products sa unang bahagi ng 2025.

Matatandaang nakapasok sa Pilipinas ang kauna-unahang kaso ng Q fever disease mula sa mga kambing na nagmula sa Estados Unidos matapos makuhanan ng mga blood samples.

Sinabi ni Secretary Laurel na limang Cold Examination Facility for Agriculture (CEFA) ay magsisimula na sa kanilang operasyon sa unang bahagi ng susunod na taon. Ang CEFA ay isang phyto sanitary inspection facility para sa mga imported na hayop, isda, halaman, at iba pang produktong pang-agrikultura.

Umaasa ang DA na magagamit ang CEFA sa Enero o Pebrero sa susunod na taon sa bahagi ng Angat, Maynila, Subic, Davao, at General Santos City na pinondohan ng ahensiya.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/metro/2024/07/07/2368305/imported-agricultural-products-sasalain-da>

REMATE:

DA: P29/kilong bigas mabibili na sa VisMin sa Agosto ‘gang Setyembre

July 7, 2024 14:31



MANILA, Philippines – SINABI ng Department of Agriculture (DA) na palawakin nito ang pagbebenta ng P29 kada kilo na programa ng bigas para sa mga mahihinang sektor sa katimugang Pilipinas sa susunod na dalawang buwan.

“Layunin naming palawakin ang bilang ng mga sentro ng Kadiwa na nag-aalok ng P29 na bigas sa mga darating na linggo at palawigin ang network na ito sa Visayas at Mindanao sa huli ng Agosto o unang bahagi ng Setyembre, sa pakikipagtulungan ng mga local government units, kooperatiba ng mga magsasaka, at mga pribadong negosyo,” sinabi ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr sa isang pahayag.

Nauna rito noong Biyernes ng umaga, Hulyo 5, sabay-sabay na inilunsad ng DA ang “malakihang” pagsubok sa pagbebenta ng bigas ng National Food Authority (NFA) buffer rice stock sa halagang P29 kada kilo sa 10 Kadiwa sites sa Metro Manila at Bulacan.

Ang P29 kada kilo ng bigas ay magagamit lamang sa mga benepisyaryo ng 4Ps, senior citizens, PWDs, at solo parents.

“Ipinapaabot ko ang aking lubos na pasasalamat sa lahat ng walang sawang nag-alay ng kanilang sarili sa matagumpay na paglulunsad ng malakihang pagsubok ng P29 Rice Program,” ani Tiu Laurel.

“Mula sa aming walang sawang pangkat sa DA, sa mga kooperatiba at asosasyon ng mga magsasaka, sa walang pag-iimbot na militar at mga pulis na nagboluntaryo ng kanilang pagsisikap upang matiyak na ang abot-kayang bigas ay umaabot sa aming mga sentro ng KADIWA at mga mahihinang kabahayan, ipinakita ninyo ang tunay na diwa ng Bayanihan—ang paniniwala. na ang ‘Tayo’ ay mas dakila kaysa ‘Ako’. Maraming Salamat po,” sabi ng Kalihim.

Ang mass trial ng P29 Rice Program ay naglalayong mangalap ng datos bilang paghahanda para sa nationwide rollout ng programa.

“Ang panahon ng pagsubok na ito ay nagpapakita ng isang mahalagang pagkakataon upang mangalap ng komprehensibong data sa iba’t ibang aspeto kabilang ang demand, supply, at logistics na magtitiyak sa tagumpay ng ganap na pagpapatupad ng P29, isang inisyatiba na pinangunahan ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. upang mapagaan ang pasanin ng mataas na presyo sa mga mahahalagang bilihin, partikular na ang bigas, para sa mahihirap, senior citizens, solo parents, at mga taong may kapansanan,” dagdag pa ng Kalihim. *Santi Celario*

<https://remate.ph/da-p29-kilong-bigas-mabibili-na-sa-vismin-sa-agosto-gang-setyembre/>

REMATE:

P29/kilo na bigas sa vulnerable groups ‘not sustainable’ – grupo

July 7, 2024 11:28



MANILA, Philippines – Sinabi ng Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. (PCAFI) nitong Sabado, Hulyo 6 na hindi sustainable ang inisyatibo na pamahalaan na magbenta ng lumang stock ng bigas mula sa National Food Authority (NFA) sa halagang P29 kada kilo sa vulnerable sectors.

Sa panayam ng DZBB, sinabi ni PCAFI president Danilo Fausto na “NFA cannot afford to sell its stock because it’s the rainy season already.”

“When a calamity hits... the NFA might not be able to release its stocks,” dagdag pa ni Fausto.

Aniya, maaaring magkaroon ng maling impresyon ang inisyatibo na tinawag na “Bigas 29” na ito ay sustainable.

“Unless the gov’t will shoulder the losses,” ani Fausto.

Sa kabila nito, iginiit ni Department of Agriculture Assistant Secretary Genevieve Guevarra na ang programa ay sustaibable.

“We are seeing it to be sustainable not only for this year but also for the coming years,” sinabi ni Guevarra sa Saturday News Forum.

Ipinaliwanag niya na regular na bumibili ang NFA ng bigas para sa buffer stocking mandate nito at magbibigay daan ang “Bigas 29” program para maipamahagi ang mga lumang stock ng bigas sa hinaharap.

“So we are seeing it to be sustainable not only for this year but also for the coming years,” ani Guevarra.

Nitong Biyernes, nagsimula na ang large-scale trial ng pagbibenta ng lumang buffer rice stocks sa Kadiwa sites sa Metro Manila at Bulacan.

Ang P29 kada kilo na bigas ay available lamang sa mga benepisyaryo ng 4Ps, senior citizens, PWDs at solo parents.

Ani Guevarra, limitado lamang sa 10 kilo kada buwan sa bawat pamilya ang pagbeventa ng P29 kada kilong bigas.

Para sa full implementation ng naturang programa, sinabi ng DA na kailangan ang nasa 69,000 metric tons ng bigas para makapagbenta ng 10 kilo ng bigas kada pamilya sa bawat buwan sa halagang P29 kada kilo sa target na 6.9 milyong tirahan. ***RNT/JGC***

<https://remate.ph/p29-kilo-na-bigas-sa-vulnerable-groups-not-sustainable-grupo/>

ABANTE:

Suporta sa mga magsasaka, mangingisda hinirit

- Abante News
- July 6, 2024



Iginit ni AGRI Party-list Rep. Wilbert Lee ang kahalagahan na suportahan at protektahan ang mga magsasaka at mangingisda bilang daan upang mapalakas ang lokal na supply ng pagkain.

Ayon sa kongresista, ang pagpapalakas sa sektor ng agrikultura at pagbibigay ng kapangyarihan sa mga magsasaka at mangi-ngisda ang susi upang ma-tamo ang ‘nutrition goals’ ng bansa na nakapaloob sa Philippine Plan of Action for Nutrition (PPAN) 2023-2028.

“Full support and protection of our farmers and fisherfolk, our food security soldiers, is a must to attain this goal,” ayon sa kongresista.

Dagdag pa niya, “Kaisa tayo sa hangarin na epek-tibong maipatupad ang PPAN. Kaya naman maha-laga na maiangat natin ang sektor ng agrikultura dahil kapag napataas natin ang supply ng pagkain, mapapababa natin ang presyo ng bilihan, at mabibigyan natin ng access ang mas mara-ming pamilyang Pilipino sa sustansiya na kailangan nila.”

Ang PPAN ay binuo ng National Nutrition Council (NNC), na siyang magsisilbing gabay ng pamahalaan, non-government organizations, academe, at pribadong sektor sa pagkilos para maibsan ang lahat ng uri ng malnutrisyon. (Eralyn Prado)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/07/06/suporta-sa-mga-magsasaka-mangingisda-hinirit/>