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**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Proposed 2025 National Budget

Agenda for Prosperity: Fulfilling the needs and aspirations of the Filipino people

BY [AMENAH F. PANGANDAMAN, DBM SECRETARY](#)

Aug 28, 2024 05:33 AM

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## **BEYOND BUDGET**



### **(Part II)**

Assalamu alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh.

On Aug. 7, 2024, I shared in this column that the ₱6.352 trillion Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 National Expenditure Program (NEP), or the President's proposed national budget, has been submitted to both chambers of Congress for deliberations and approval. With the theme “Agenda for Prosperity: Fulfilling the needs and aspirations of the Filipino people,” I emphasized that it is more than a financial document; it is our roadmap to achieve growth next year, woven through the three pillars of the Philippine Development Plan (PDP) 2023-2028. This week, allow me to expound on these pillars.

#### **Pillar 1: Develop and protect individual and family capabilities**

The PDP envisions that, by 2028, Filipinos will “have long and healthy lives in livable communities with enough opportunities for high-quality lifelong learning for them to become healthy, smart, and innovative.” To attain this, we are promoting human and social development.

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As President Bongbong Marcos said in his Budget Message, “Toward this vision, the social and economic services will continue to be priority sectors under the Agenda for Prosperity.”

Topmost is revitalizing education. Under the NEP, this sector was allocated ₱977.6 billion, equivalent to 15.4 percent of the budget and 3.4 percent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP), to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. To reduce vulnerabilities and provide quality healthcare, the Department of Health, including PhilHealth, was allotted ₱297.6 billion to continue the advanced implementation of the Universal Health Care Act while fully recovering and rebuilding from the pandemic.

Meanwhile, ₱591.8 billion has been allocated for various major social programs. The Department of Social Welfare and Development will receive ₱230.1 billion for its programs, i.e., Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), Social Pension for Indigent Senior Citizens, Protective Services for Individuals and Families and Difficult Circumstances, Philippine Food Stamp, and Sustainable Livelihood Program. The ₱591.8 billion also includes fuel subsidies for the transport sector, assistance for farmers and fisherfolk, as well as housing programs of the national government, among others.

Further, we will increase our kababayans' income-earning ability through the provision of harmonized livelihood and employment programs, which have been allocated with ₱36.8 billion.

### **Pillar 2: Transform production sectors**

By modernizing agriculture and agribusiness, revitalizing industries, reinvigorating services, and advancing research and development, technology, and innovation, I believe we can transform production sectors to generate more quality jobs and competitive products.

Hence, the Department of Agriculture, its attached agencies, and the Department of Agrarian Reform will receive ₱211.3 billion to modernize agriculture and agribusiness to become competitive and to achieve food security.

Meanwhile, quality jobs and competitive products may be attained by supporting micro, small, and medium enterprises and fostering a dynamic science, technology, and innovation ecosystem — for the country to be a smart and sustainable manufacturing, innovation, creativity, and sustainability regional hub. Toward these goals, the Department of Trade and Industry allocated ₱8.6 billion, while the Department of Science and Technology with ₱28.8 billion, under the FY 2025 NEP. To continue rebuilding the tourism sector, the Department of Tourism has been allocated ₱3.4 billion.

### **Pillar 3: Create an enabling environment**

The third pillar of the PDP aims to foster an enabling environment through programs that ensure macroeconomic stability, infrastructure development, digitalization, national security, bureaucratic efficiency, public order and safety, justice, and climate and environment.

To ensure macroeconomic stability, we will adhere to the Public Financial Management (PFM) Reforms Roadmap 2024-2028 by implementing the Integrated Financial Management Information System and strengthening the PFM Competency Program, among others — improving efficiency in public service delivery.

Moreover, we will expand and upgrade both our physical and digital infrastructure. We will finance the flagship Build Better More Infrastructure Program, allocating ₱900 billion to the Department of Public Works and Highways, or 14.2 percent of the proposed budget. Meanwhile, the Department of Transportation will receive ₱180.9 billion, more than double from its allocation of ₱74 billion in 2024. Further, to combat graft and corruption, we allocated ₱70.6 billion to rapidly digitalize our bureaucracy.

Additionally, in line with the administration's focus on promoting inclusive development that reaches even the most remote and underserved areas, the Department of the Interior and Local Government will receive ₱278.4 billion. To uphold national security, modernize defense capabilities, and ensure peace and security, ₱256.1 billion is allocated for the Department of National Defense.

To enhance the administration of justice and institute reforms, the Judiciary is allocated ₱63.6 billion for the efficient functioning of courts and other judicial bodies, while the Department of Justice will receive ₱40.6 billion. Last, to ensure sustainability, climate-related initiatives will now reach ₱1.02 trillion, in our commitment to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 13. Beyond budget, the road to development is never easy. But a clear vision, a strong plan, the unwavering support of the people, and a national budget that, if executed with utmost care and diligence, will build upon the gains we have achieved thus far for a future where every Filipino can reach their full potential. As we embark on this journey together, let us remain united in our purpose, steadfast in our resolve, and hopeful for a Bagong Pilipinas we aspire.

*(Amenah F. Pangandaman is the Secretary of the Department of Budget and Management.)*

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/28/proposed-2025-national-budget-1>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Marcos OKs increased fund for massive coconut planting, fertilization

BY [BETHEENA UNITE](#)

Aug 28, 2024 00:16 AM

President Marcos has approved increasing the budget for the massive planting and replanting programs of the coconut industry for 2025.



President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. presides over the sectoral meeting to discuss the updates on the massive planting and replanting of coconut on Aug. 27, 2024. (Photo courtesy of PPA/KJ Rosales)

Malacañang said Marcos approved the increased budget for planting and replanting amounting to P1 billion and fertilization program amounting to P2.5 billion during a sectoral meeting on Tuesday, Aug. 27.

Under the Philippine Coconut Industry Development Plan 2024-2034 (PCIDP 2024-2034), the Philippine Coconut Industry aims to plant 100 million coconut trees by 2028.

The President made the approval in response to the directive in October last year for a detailed plan to develop the coconut industry in all areas of the value chain, together with the necessary funding and the timeline to accomplish its targets.

“So that’s why I’m focusing on the production side and that’s what we have to increase. The critical part of that is the replanting,” he said.

Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) Administrator Dexter Buted said the additional budget for the planting and replanting program of coconut trees will enable them to plant 15.3 million trees in 2025.

Under the program, the PCA will plant/replant a total of 100 million coconut seedlings in 700,000 hectares of land by 2028 all over the country to increase coconut production by 4.7 billion valued at P33.1 billion by 2034.

This year, the PCA will plant 8.5 million seedlings, 15.3 million seedlings in 2025, and 25.4 million every year from 2026 to 2028.

Marcos pointed out the replanting program is an important project because of the industry's potential.

“That’s why we still maintain our very high position in terms of coconut products exports because despite the fact that we have neglected the coconut industry over so many years, we still, I think we’re number one pa rin,” he said.

“And despite the fact that we are really working with very limited raw material because nga hindi nag-replant puro matanda na yung mga trees natin (because we did not replant, our trees are old. That’s why this replanting is important,” he added.

According to the Chief Executive, there is a big market for coconut products as he expects the private sector to buy all the supply “because the market is so large and growing” and the industry has not reached the market’s limit on coconut product demand.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) will also implement intercropping while farmers wait for the trees to become productive. Among the crops that will be planted include coffee, cacao and bananas.

Marcos also ordered the PCA to work closely with the Cooperative Development Authority to consolidate farmers’ groups and associations to enable them to implement the massive planting and replanting program.

The 10-year PCIDP plan was developed to address the critical constraints of the low growth rate of the coconut industry in terms of production, low nut yield due to ageing coconut tree population, natural calamities, pests and diseases, poor farming and insufficient budget allocation.

To implement the plan, the PCA has proposed a budget amounting to P102.02 billion within the 10-year period.

The Philippine coconut industry has contributed \$3.22 billion to the country’s export earnings in 2022, which is 43 percent of the country’s total agricultural exports.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/28/marcos-o-ks-increased-fund-for-massive-coconut-planting-fertilization>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# VP Duterte: Don't politicize West PH Sea territorial row

BY [RAYMUND ANTONIO](#)

Aug 27, 2024 04:05 PM

For the first time, Vice President Sara Duterte spoke about the Philippines' maritime and territorial issues with China, saying that it is best not to politicize the issue merely for "media mileage" and "social media commentary."



*Vice President Sara Duterte (Photo from Inday Sara Duterte Facebook page)*

During the budget hearing for the Office of the Vice President's (OVP) proposed 2025 budget on Tuesday, Aug. 27, the official broke her silence and expressed her appreciation for "the sacrifices made by our uniformed personnel in the service of our national interest."

Duterte is a reserved officer of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

"However, it is crucial to avoid politicizing their sacrifices for media mileage or social media commentary," the Vice President said.

"Instead, we should focus on ensuring that their efforts are recognized and valued in a manner that respects their contributions and uphold the dignity of their service, which we in the OVP, continue to do and have always chosen to do away from the cameras," she added.

Duterte also recognized that while her "silence on specific harassment issues" are being perceived "as a lack of response," President Marcos remains the chief architect of foreign policy "that follows appropriate agencies are tasked with addressing and implementing measures related to our foreign policy positions and principles."



She also hinted that decisions on the territorial row are not part of her mandate and instead “are made following established mandates and particular responsibilities of relevant agencies.”

In a rare statement, the country’s second-highest official cited both the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the 2016 Arbitral Award that invalidated the basis of China’s claims in the South China Sea.

“As Filipinos, we are all in agreement that our claim is firmly anchored on the UNCLOS and the 2016 Arbitral Award,” she said, noting though that “bilateral relations are not dictated by a singular issue or concern like a territorial dispute.”

Rather, the official backed a “comprehensive approach that considers the broader context of shared interests and regional stability.”

She also stressed that the Constitution “provides that the State shall pursue an independent foreign policy. In its relations with other states, the paramount consideration shall be national sovereignty, territorial integrity, national interest, and the right to self determination.”

This is the first time Duterte has addressed the country’s issues with China, which included, among others harassments and intimidations in areas well within the Philippines exclusive economic zone (EEZ), the bullying of Filipino fishermen, the ramming of Philippine vessels by China Coast Guard (CCG) ships, and lately, the launching of flares against a Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) patrol plane.

Despite her remarks, the Vice President did not condemn China’s actions and did not ask Beijing to cease from its unlawful intrusions into Philippine territories and EEZs.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/27/vp-duterte-don-t-politicize-west-ph-sea-territorial-row>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **PH Navy: 163 Chinese ships spotted in WPS amid increased hostilities**

BY [MARTIN SADONGDONG](#)

Aug 27, 2024 03:49 PM



West Philippine Sea (File photo)

A total of 163 Chinese ships were monitored by the Philippine Navy (PN) in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) in the past week, a period marked by a series of hostile engagements at sea between the two countries.

The deployment was recorded from Aug. 20 to 26, which was bigger than the 129 vessels logged from Aug. 13 to 19.

What was even noticeable was the increase of Chinese vessels in Escoda (Sabina) Shoal where BRP Teresa Magbanua has been deployed since April while being resupplied by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).

“There is a marked increase in Escoda Shoal to disrupt the conduct of lawful activities by the PCG and BFAR [Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources],” Rear Adm. Roy Vincent Trinidad, PN spokesperson for WPS, said on Tuesday, Aug. 27.

“This is notable in the past days wherein PCG and BFAR ships were subject to coercive and aggressive actions,” he added.

In its monitoring from Aug. 13 to 19, the PN recorded 19 Chinese vessels in Escoda Shoal: five China Coast Guard (CCG) ships, two People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLA-N) warships, and 12 Chinese maritime militia vessels (CMMVs).

This grew to seven CCG ships, six PLA-N warships, and 40 CMMVs from Aug. 20 to 26.

The PN also monitored 35 Chinese vessels in Pag-asa Island, 23 in Ayungin Shoal, 18 in Bajo de Masinloc, and 17 in Iroquois Reef.

There were also eight Chinese vessels in Kota Island, three each in Lawak Island and Panata Island; and one apiece in Parola Island, Likas Island, and Patag Island.

Meanwhile, there was no sighting of any Chinese vessel in Julian Felipe Reef.

Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr., Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief, said the military will continue to patrol the WPS despite China’s aggression.

“We have to establish our effective and sustainable presence in the West Philippine Sea,” Brawner said during the 35<sup>th</sup> International Military Law and Operations Conference at the Manila Hotel. “We have to assert our sovereignty and our sovereign rights.”

This month alone, there have been six recorded incidents of Chinese aggression in the WPS.

These include the blocking of PCG vessels in Escoda Shoal on Aug. 26, ramming and firing of water cannon against BFAR ship BRP Datu Sanday in Escoda Shoal on Aug. 25; launching of flares against a BFAR plane near Pag-asa Island on Aug. 22; collision with PCG ships in Escoda Shoal and use of flares against a BFAR plane both on Aug. 19; and firing of flares against a Philippine Air Force (PAF) aircraft in Bajo de Masinloc on Aug. 8.

“The Navy is concerned with all these coercive and aggressive actions that raise the risk for a miscalculation. The PN – and the AFP – maintains close coordination with the PCG and BFAR to ensure safety and the security of our exclusive economic zone,” Trinidad said.

Trinidad said the PN has increased its presence not only in Escoda Shoal but all over the nine features occupied by the Philippines in the WPS.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/27/ph-navy-163-chinese-ships-spotted-in-wps-amid-increased-hostilities>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# China claims it's PH that rammed into its ship

BY [JOSEPH PEDRAJAS](#)

Aug 27, 2024 01:23 PM

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Despite video clips showing Chinese ships running after a Philippine vessel, China said it was the Philippines that rammed into its ship.

"On August 25, an official vessel of Philippines' Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources [BFAR]... intruded into the adjacent waters of Xianbin Jiao of China's Nansha Qundao, and acted dangerously by deliberately ramming the China Coast Guard vessel that was carrying out law enforcement operation," Lin Jian, spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry, said on Monday, Aug. 26. Lin also said that the Philippines supposedly ignored China's "firm and repeated dissuasion."

His pronouncement came after a People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) and a China Coast Guard (CCG) ship chased and rammed into a Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in the waters off Escoda Shoal.

"The CCG vessels made close perilous maneuvers that resulted in ramming, blasted horns, and deployed water cannons against the BFAR vessel, eventually leading to the latter's engine failure and forcing an early termination of the humanitarian operation," Jay Tarriela, Philippines Coast Guard (PCG) spokesman, spoke about the maritime incident.

But for China, what it did was "professional, restrained and appropriate." On the other hand, several countries came out to support the Philippines from China's actions.

The ambassadors of the United States, Australia, Japan, United Kingdom, France and Canada voiced out their condemnation against Beijing's aggression and called on China to respect international law and the arbitral ruling. "The responsibility of causing the collision fully lies with the Philippines. China Coast Guard took necessary measures in accordance with domestic and international law," Lin also said.

Lin said that the Philippines is now seeking a long-term presence in Escoda Shoal by attempting to anchor a coast guard ship into the lagoon, which is well within the Philippines exclusive economic zone (EEZ).

"The Philippines' move seriously infringes on China's sovereignty, violates the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC), and threatens the peace and stability in the South China Sea," Lin claimed.

He then urged the Philippines to stop its supposed "infringement and provocation activities at once, and withdraw the vessel immediately."

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/27/china-claims-it-s-ph-that-rammed-into-its-ship>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# PCG lectures China: Coast guard ships should be ‘instruments of diplomacy’

China Coast Guard again blocks a humanitarian mission by the Philippine Coast Guard in the West Philippine Sea on Aug. 26.

**BY [MARTIN SADONGDONG](#)**

Aug 27, 2024 12:59 PM



A Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) ship and a China Coast Guard (CCG) vessel sail close to each other in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) on Aug. 26, 2024. (Courtesy of PCG)

White-hulled ships, or coast guard vessels, shall be used to preserve lives and properties at sea, not endanger people’s lives nor cause damage to valuables.

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) had this to say to China after the China Coast Guard (CCG) again blocked a humanitarian mission in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) on Monday, Aug. 26.

Commo. Jay Tarriela, PCG spokesperson on WPS, said BRP Cabra and BRP Cape Engaño attempted to deliver vital food and supplies to personnel onboard the BRP Teresa Magbanua in Escoda (Sabina) Shoal when they were blocked by a big fleet of Chinese vessels.

China deployed an “excessive force” comprised of six CCG vessels, three People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLA-N) ships and 31 Chinese maritime militia boats to obstruct the humanitarian mission, the official further stated.

“Such actions resulted in our two 44-meter multi-role response vessels (MRRVs) being unable to safely deliver essential supplies, including a special ice cream treat from the Commandant [Admiral Ronnie Gil Gavan] in honor of National Heroes’ Day,” Tarriela said on Monday night.

“The PCG recognizes that white hulls are unique instruments of diplomacy that promotes peace and maintain harmony and stability in the region,” he added.

BRP Teresa Magbanua has been deployed to Escoda Shoal, located approximately 110 nautical miles from Palawan, since April to guard against illegal poachers and suspected reclamation activities.

The National Heroes Day voyage came a day after Chinese vessels also rammed and fired water cannon at a Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) ship while on a resupply mission on Aug. 25.

According to Tarriela, China's effort to block the resupply mission in Escoda Shoal is reminiscent of their actions in Ayungin (Second Thomas) Shoal, where Philippine Navy ship BRP Sierra Madre has been beached and serving as a military outpost for the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

"The PCG remains steadfast in our commitment to uphold national interests and ensure the safety and security of our waters," Tarriela noted.

He then urged the CCG to abide national law and stop its deployment of maritime forces "that could undermine mutual respect, a universally recognized foundation for responsible and friendly relations among Coast Guards."

China, for its part, accused the Philippines of illegally intruding into the features they claim in the South China Sea. Such claims were already invalidated by a 2016 arbitral ruling, but Beijing continues to ignore the decision.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/8/27/pcg-lectures-china-coast-guard-ships-are-instruments-of-diplomacy>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Meat imports climb 10 percent in H1

[Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas](#) - The Philippine Star

August 28, 2024 | 12:00am



Imported meat products rose to 648 MT from January to June.

MANILA, Philippines — The country's meat imports in the first half grew by almost 10 percent year-on-year, driven by higher purchases of chicken meat and pork to meet the growing domestic demand for animal protein.

Latest Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) data showed that meat imports from January to June hit 647,745 MT from last year's 590,766 MT.

BAI data showed that the increase in meat imports was driven by higher inbound shipments of key meat products like chicken meat, pork and beef.

Chicken meat imports rose by four percent year-on-year to 221,599 MT from 212,812 MT, driven by higher purchases of mechanically deboned meat, a key raw material used by meat processors for the manufacturing of products like hotdogs and meatloaf.

Pork imports, which accounted for nearly half of the total meat purchases abroad, expanded by 10 percent to 316,995 MT from 286,275 MT.

The country continued to turn to foreign supplies to augment its domestic stocks of pork as the local hog industry continues to reel from the threats of African swine fever (ASF).

The US Department of Agriculture – Foreign Agricultural Service in Manila earlier projected that the Philippines would be importing 480,000 MT of pork this year to boost its supplies as domestic output would remain lackluster amid the ASF scare.

Beef imports, meanwhile, rose by 30 percent year-on-year to 84,919 MT from 65,676 MT on the back of higher beef cut purchases.

Industry stakeholders have earlier noted that local beef demand is steadily growing across all classes as people's income increases.

The industry earlier noted that consumers have been looking for cheaper alternatives to pork, such as chicken and perhaps now beef.

Turkey meat imports grew to 722.53 MT from 112.92 MT last year.

BAI data showed that imports of meat of duck, lamb and buffalo all contracted year-on-year during the reference period.

Buffalo meat imports fell by 8.7 percent to 23,095 MT from 25,304 MT while lamb meat declined by 22.4 percent year-on-year to 327.38 MT. Duck meat imports, meanwhile, plunged by 47.4 percent to 85.85 MT from 163.34 MT.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/08/28/2380970/meat-imports-climb-10-percent-h1>



**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Barangays with active ASF cases now 458

[Jasper Emmanuel Arcalas](#) - The Philippine Star

August 28, 2024 | 12:00am



Latest data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed that as of Aug. 21, there were 458 barangays across 115 municipalities in 32 provinces that reported ASF cases.

Cesar Ramirez

MANILA, Philippines — The number of barangays with active cases of African swine fever (ASF) has increased by at least 200 within a span of two weeks, including new confirmed cases in Northern Luzon.

Latest data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed that as of Aug. 21, there were 458 barangays across 115 municipalities in 32 provinces that reported ASF cases.

The figure is higher by 207 than the 251 barangays reported on Aug. 8.

BAI, an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA), updates its animal disease situation report every two weeks.

North Cotabato has the most number of active cases with 87 followed by Occidental Mindoro with 69 and Batangas with 66, according to the BAI data.

The agency confirmed new ASF cases in 10 more provinces across four regions during the reference period.

In Batangas alone, the number of cases has more than doubled to 66 from 32 previously, the BAI said.

Agriculture officials attributed the spike in the cases to rains and floods that exposed buried ASF-infected pigs, resulting in the contamination of waterways and spread of the virus.

They said that unscrupulous traders continue to transport sick pigs from areas with confirmed cases.

“It is very lucrative to transport (sick) pigs because traders buy these at a low price and sell these at higher prices,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary Constante Palabrica said.

The DA advised the public, particularly hog raisers, to ensure that ASF-infected dead hogs are buried at least 10 feet deep and covered with plastic or a high-density polyethylene material to protect the water table from pollution.

DA officials urged local government units to set up checkpoints in their jurisdictions to prevent the transport of undocumented and sick pigs.

The DA has set up additional checkpoints in Metro Manila and Southern Luzon. From six, the number of DA-operated checkpoints in these regions is now 12.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said the BAI would start vaccinating pigs in Batangas on Aug. 30, or three days ahead of the original schedule on Sept. 2.

De Mesa said the initial vaccination would involve 2,000 doses of ASF vaccine.

He said the DA is planning to file charges against traders caught transporting pigs with falsified documents as well as ASF-infected hogs.

The agency gave assurance that the country has adequate supply of pork.

It urged consumers to buy pork and pork products that have been inspected by the National Meat Inspection Service.

The DA said it is safe to consume pork as ASF does not pose a threat to humans.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/08/28/2381024/barangays-active-asf-cases-now-458>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# US, EU, 2 nations condemn China's 'unlawful' actions near Escoda Shoal

[Cristina Chi](#) - Philstar.com

August 27, 2024 | 12:23pm



**The Philippine Coast Guard observe Chinese vessels in Sabina Shoal.**

Philippine Coast Guard / Release

MANILA, Philippines — The United States, European Union, Japan and South Korea have all denounced Chinese vessels' "unlawful" and "dangerous" maneuvers against Philippine vessels during a humanitarian mission near Escoda (Sabina) Shoal in the West Philippine Sea over the weekend.

In separate statements, the three countries and the EU urged China to adhere to a rules-based order in the South China Sea, where tensions have been flaring between the Philippines and China nearly every week of August due to repeated altercations in the sea and airspace.

US Ambassador MaryKay Carlson in a statement on Sunday criticized China's actions as "unsafe, unlawful, and aggressive."

On the same day, EU Ambassador to the Philippines, Luc Véron, said the Chinese Coast Guard vessels' "dangerous manoeuvres" that sought to prevent a vessel by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) from delivering supplies to Filipino fishers was "disturbing."

Meanwhile, both Japan and Korea called for China to respect international law and described its actions as being contrary to "commitments" and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), an international legal framework for all maritime activities.

China is a signatory to UNCLOS but also rejects a 2016 ruling by an arbitral tribunal constituted under UNCLOS that dismissed its sweeping claims in the South China Sea.

"Another unacceptable development around Sabina Shoal. Any harassment and actions which increase tensions or obstruct freedom of navigation are not tolerated," Japanese Ambassador Endo Kazuya said on Sunday.

The embassy of South Korea stressed their support for "peace, stability, safety and a rules-based order in the South China Sea" and highlighted the "importance of freedom of navigation and overflight in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS."

On Sunday, Chinese Coast Guard ships blasted water cannons and rammed BFAR vessel BFP Datu Sunday some 10 nautical miles from Escoda Shoal, a low tide elevation around 75 nautical miles away from Palawan that has become the new flashpoint between the Philippines and China.

The altercation took place while the BFAR vessel was on its way to deliver diesel, food and medical supplies to Filipino fishermen operating near Escoda Shoal.

The incident left BRP Datu Sunday with a damaged engine and navigation equipment that forced an "early termination" of its humanitarian mission, according to the National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea.

A day after, two Philippine Coast Guard vessels were again blocked by several Chinese ships during its resupply mission to Escoda Shoal.

## **Fake news allegations hurled**

The two countries could not agree on a single version of events. The Chinese Coast Guard, through state media, claimed that it rescued Filipino crew members who fell overboard after the collision. The Philippines denies this claim.

"Claims suggesting that our personnel fell overboard and were subsequently rescued by the Chinese Coast Guard are completely unfounded. This fake news and misinformation serves as a clear illustration of the PRC's willingness to distort the truth and engage in disinformation to bolster its public image," the task force said.

The BRP Datu Sanday was "targeted by the People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) ship 626 and multiple China Coast Guard (CCG) ships, which attempted to encircle and block the humanitarian mission," according to the task force.

## **Sincerity questioned**

Another round of accusations traded between the Philippines and China has prompted the National Maritime Council to question the latter's sincerity in de-escalating tensions.

That China's "provocative and dangerous actions" were made in a single week "calls into question China's supposed commitment to de-escalate the situation... and create a conducive environment for dialogue," the National Maritime Council said on Monday.

It is unclear whether both governments have brought up this latest incident through the presidential hotline it [launched](#) in July to improve both countries' communications regarding maritime incidents.

On Tuesday, Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro delivered scathing remarks against China before an audience of security and defense officials during a conference of the US Indo-Pacific Command in Manila.

"China... is the biggest disruptor of international peace in the ASEAN region," Teodoro said.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/08/27/2380929/us-eu-2-nations-condemn-chinas-unlawful-actions-near-escoda-shoal>

# Put more profiteers behind bars

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 04:50 AM August 28, 2024

The graphic features a blue background with a white central box. In the top left of the white box is a blue circle containing a white double quote icon. In the top right is the text 'INQUIRER OPINION' in blue. Below this is the word 'EDITORIAL' in blue, underlined. The main title 'Put more profiteers behind bars' is in bold blue. The body text is in bold black. At the bottom of the white box, it says 'READ THE FULL ARTICLE HERE:' followed by the 'PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER' logo and the 'INQUIRERPLUS' logo with the text 'Philippine Daily Inquirer newspaper's E-reader and digital version'.

President Marcos' warning during his second State of the Nation Address in 2023 that the days of smugglers, hoarders, and manipulators of the prices of agriculture commodities were numbered seems to be paying off after the Philippine Competition Commission (PCC) earlier this month said charges will be filed against 12 onion importers and traders accused of colluding with each other to lock out competition and control as much as half of the market, thus artificially inflating onion prices that hit a record high of P700 a kilo in 2022.

In an Aug. 13 memorandum to the President, the PCC said there was evidence that these 12 companies and individuals involved in onion importation and trading divided among themselves the sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSICs) issued by the Department of Agriculture (DA)-Bureau of Plant Industry and the import volume among themselves.

“By agreeing to allocate SPSICs and divide among themselves the actual volume of imports, respondents effectively controlled more than 50 percent of the volume of onions imported into the Philippines during the relevant period,” the PCC said, adding this is penalized under Section 14(b)(2) of the Philippine Competition Act (PCA).

### **Hefty fine**

The PCC also found evidence that the 12 companies and individuals “colluded to lessen competition in the market.” This means that instead of competing against each other to provide the market with the lowest possible price for the imported onions, they “shared, exchanged, and discussed sensitive business information such as price, suppliers, customers, volume, shipping, distribution, and storage,” enabling them to set a higher price and, ergo, more profits at the expense of hapless consumers.

Indeed, by “restricting or distorting competition,” which ensures that the market gets the best quality products at the best price, these companies and individuals resorted to cooperation for their own benefit.

The PCA’s Enforcement Office has thus recommended that these unscrupulous firms and individuals be slapped a hefty fine of P2.4 billion, in hopes of sending a strong message that the government was serious about ridding the market of these profiteers, hoarders, and price manipulators that are distorting prices of basic goods.

While filing charges is laudable, it is not enough. The administration must do more to sustain the campaign and bring an end to smuggling and profiteering.

## **Collusion from within**

It must consistently apply the law and run after those that are manipulating the prices of other heavily consumed agricultural commodities, from garlic to pork, chicken, and beef. This way, the message that price manipulation will not be tolerated by this administration will sink in. These actions are especially important since the Marcos administration has resorted to more imports to temper inflation.

The DA should review its rules to check for patterns of possibly the same importers cornering too big a slice of the market to influence prices. Having the same names ending up with the clearances should spur the DA into checking its own bureaucracy and determine possible collusion from within.

At the same time, it should strengthen market surveillance to determine if market prices are not behaving as they should.

This way, prices of commodities—not just onions—can already be investigated way before they hit record highs for obviously there are manipulators and traders driving up the prices just to fatten their wallets. The farming sector had blamed the DA for failing to make accurate supply estimates and resisting imports, after onion prices hit as high as P700 a kilo between the latter part of 2022 and the early months of 2023. Agriculture officials also suspected internal price manipulations of skyrocketing onion prices.

## **Not mere lip service**

Complementing these actions is the immediate passage of the amended Anti-Agricultural Smuggling Act, which is already among the priorities of the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council for the current year.

The bill seeks to include the acts of hoarding, profiteering, and cartel of agricultural products on the list of crimes involving economic sabotage, punishable with life imprisonment as well as a fine equivalent to thrice the fair market value of the goods.



Sen. Cynthia Villar, chair of the Senate committee on agriculture, food, and agrarian reform, emphasized in 2023 that the law needs to be passed as the current law has not lived up to its promise, nor has anyone ever been convicted since the law was enacted in 2016.

But aside from putting more teeth to the laws, expectations are high that successful prosecution of smugglers will follow and eventually lead to putting them in jail. This will prove to one and all that the President's promise is not mere lip service but meaningful action to make a real impact on the market and alleviate the sufferings of the people.

<https://opinion.inquirer.net/176375/put-more-profiteers-behind-bars>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# ASF vaccinations to roll out Friday in Batangas hot spots

August 27, 2024 | 8:58 pm



REUTERS

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it will start vaccinating hogs against African Swine Fever (ASF) by Friday, beginning in Batangas, which has reported significant new outbreaks.

“We’re going to implement the vaccination this Friday in Lobo, Batangas *para magsimula na ’yung treatment ng mga dumadaming* cases of ASF (to begin addressing the increase in ASF cases),” Agriculture Assistant Secretary for Poultry and Swine Constance J. Palabrica told reporters on Tuesday.

He added that the increase in ASF cases may have been caused by rainy weather, causing the disease to spread via the water supply.

“We expected that because of the rains, (ASF) has spread to areas that were previously negative,” Mr. Palabrica said.

As of Aug. 21, 115 municipalities had active ASF cases across 32 provinces, according to the Bureau of Animal Industry. There were 64 affected municipalities as of Aug. 8.

He added that culled hogs should be buried at least 10 feet below ground and covered with plastic to prevent the spread of the virus when it rains.

“(The burial spot) needs to be covered to prevent ASF from entering the water system... It could hit the water table, and the disease can spread there,” he said.

In a separate briefing, Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Arnel V. de Mesa said that an initial 2,000 doses of the first batch of 10,000 will be used on Batangas hogs.

“We will start in Batangas and then eventually in Quezon. If the results are okay, then we’ll move around to other areas,” Mr. De Mesa added.

The DA has initially procured 10,000 doses of the vaccine after the surge in cases in Batangas. It has allocated P350 million for 600,000 vaccine doses for the broader roll out.

The Food and Drug Administration granted a Certificate of Product Registration for the AVAC ASF Live Vaccine from Vietnam to conduct controlled DA-led trials.

He said one other factor that may have contributed to the spread was the transport of infected hogs for sale at low prices, giving the farmers at least some income in lieu of taking a loss in a hog cull.

The DA has set up checkpoints to monitor the movement of hogs outside active ASF areas.

“The vaccine is just one of the many tools available to us. So, biosecurity, border control, our repopulation program, of course, and our information dissemination are also important,” Mr. De Mesa said.

The DA has also raised the indemnification rate to P4,000 for piglets, P8,000 for medium-sized hogs, and P12,000 for sows and large hogs that have to be culled. The maximum indemnification was previously P5,000 per animal. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/27/616470/asf-vaccinations-to-roll-out-friday-in-batangas-hot-spots/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# Well-milled rice averages P56.22/kg in early Aug.

August 27, 2024 | 8:57 pm



PHILIPPINE STAR/KRIZ JOHN ROSALES

THE national average price of well-milled rice was P56.22 per kilogram (kg) as of early August, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

The PSA said prices edged lower during the Aug. 1 to 5 period, which it calls the first phase of the month, from the average P56.33 per kilo reported in the previous period of July 15-17, or the second phase of that month.

The highest retail price was reported in the Western Visayas, where the staple grain averaged P59.53 per kilo during the period.

At the low end during the period was Ilocos Region, where rice prices averaged P52.86 per kilo.

The PSA reported that regular-milled rice averaged P50.76 per kilo, down from P50.88 during the prior period.

The highest price for regular-milled rice was recorded in Davao Region at P53.46 per kilo.

At the low end was the Cagayan Valley, where regular-milled rice averaged P45.05.

The national average price for pork *liempo* (belly) fell to P356.3 per kilo during the period from P357.01 previously.

Pork *kasim* (shoulder) fell to P337.66 per kilo against the P338.37 in the prior period.

The average price for bone-in pork fell to P303.55 per kilo during the Aug. 1-5 period from P305.57 previously.

Dressed chicken averaged P205.26 per kilo in early August, up from P202.47 earlier.

The average price for chicken egg rose to P8.67 per piece from P8.54 previously. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/08/27/616466/well-milled-rice-averages-p56-22-kg-in-early-aug/>

**REMATE:**

## **Pagtuturok ng ASF vax sa Batangas aarangkada sa Aug. 30**

August 27, 2024 17:34



MANILA, Philippines- Inanunsyo ng Department of Agriculture (DA) nitong Martes ang pagsisimula ng government-controlled vaccine rollout laban sa African swine fever (ASF) sa Batangas sa Agosto 30. “We’re going to implement the vaccination this Friday in Lobo para masimulan na iyong treatment na mangyayari dito sa dumadami ng kaso ng ASF. Expected natin yan dahil sa ulan,” pahayag ni DA Assistant Secretary for Swine and Poultry Constante Palabrica sa isang phone interview.

Sa hiwalay na panayam, sinabi ni DA Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa na sinisilip nilang ipamahagi ang nasa 2,000 doses ng AVAC live vaccines sa Lobo.

“So, August 30 we’ll start in Batangas and then eventually sa (in) Quezon. Pag okay ito, then we’ll move around in other areas. Perhaps, siguro mga 2,000, ganun unahin natin,” pahayag ng opisyal.

Inanunsyo nina Palabrica at De Mesa ang vaccine rollout sa pag-ulat ng Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) ng 1,808 porsyentong pagtaas sa red zones o barangay na may aktibong ASF cases mula Mayo 17.

Hanggang noong Agosto 21, iniulat ng BAI ang 458 barangay sa 15 rehiyon sa ilalim ng red zones, na mas mataas kumpara sa 24 barangay sa unang kalahating bahagi ng Mayo.

“Titignan natin, June 7, 32 lang yung barangays na may active cases. So, unti-unti tumaas iyan. July, naging 150, and then early August, naging 251,” wika ni De Mesa.

Sa kabila nito, iginiit ng agriculture officials na nananatiling under control ang ASF situation sa bansa dahil sa mahigpit na strict biosecurity protocols ng pamahalaan, ASF vaccination plans, at patuloy na testing, repopulation, at indemnification programs. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/pagtuturok-ng-asf-vax-sa-batangas-aarangkada-sa-aug-30/>

**REMATE:**

## **ASF-affected barangays tumaas ng 82% – DA-BAI**

August 27, 2024 17:07



MANILA, Philippines- Umakyat ang bilang ng mga barangay na apektado ng African swine fever (ASF) sa 458, mas mataas ng mahigit 82% kumpara sa nakaraang tala ng Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) nitong buwan.

Sa pinakabagong bulletin hanggang noong Agosto 21, iniulat ng BAI na naitala ang aktibong ASF cases sa 458 barangay sa 32 lalawigan sa 15 sa 17 rehiyon ng bansa.

Mas mataas ang mga bilang na ito kumpara sa datos ng BAI hanggang noong Agosto 8, kung saan naitala ang mga kaso sa 251 barangay sa 22 probinsya sa 11 rehiyon.



Ani Agriculture Assistant Secretary for Poultry and Swine Dante Palabrica, inaasahan na ang pagtaas ng mga bilang sa gitna ng tag-ulan.

“Expected natin ‘yan dahil sa ulan at kumalat hanggang doon sa mga area na dati ay negative. At tulad ng sinabi ko na kahit na ibaon mo ‘yung baboy pag may ASF, ‘pag nabungkal ito, tatamaan na naman ito sa mga baboy sa area,” wika ni Palabrica.

Dagdag ni Palabrica, maaaring ang pagklat ng ASF ay dulot din ng tiwaling traders na nagbebenta ng mga baboy na sapul ng sakit.

Makatutulong umano ang local government units sa pagkontrol sa pagkalat ng mga may sakit na baboy.

“Ang LGU ay independent by itself and they have the funds. Ang LGU ay dapat na mag-setup ng checkpoints sa kanilang lugar para first border at doon pa lang maibaon nila ‘yung [mga infected na baboy]. Ang second border... Ito sa NCR (National Capital Region). Hindi naman natin masasabi na maco-cover lahat ng checkpoints ‘yan,” giit ni Palabrica. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/asf-affected-barangays-tumaas-ng-82-da-bai/>

**REMATE:**

## **Pating na ibinibenta sa palengke sa Sorsogon, tututukan ng BFAR**

August 27, 2024 09:36



MANILA, Philippines – Mahigpit na imomonitor ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) sa Bicol ang mga pamilihan at fish landing sites sa rehiyon matapos makumpirma ng mga awtoridad ang bentahan ng pating sa Matnog, Sorsogon.

Ininspeksyon ng BFAR Bicol ang naturang pamilihan kung saan umano ibinibenta ang mga pating.

Dito kinumpirma ng ahensya na ibinibenta nga sa merkado ang Coral Catsharks at Whitetip Reef Sharks.

Klasipikado ang Whitetip Reef Shark bilang vulnerable species at protektado sa ilalim ng RA 10654 at international conventions dahil sa bumababang populasyon.

“On the other hand, ito pong whitetip reef shark, classified siya as vulnerable species sa CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora),” ani Rowena Bricia-Briones, BFAR Bicol Spokesperson.

“So ibig sabihon strictly na ipinagbabawal ang pagdakop asin pagpabakal kaining species na ini,” dagdag niya.

Bukod sa pinaigting na monitoring ng mga pamilihan at fish landing sites, maglalabas din ng educational materials ang BFAR upang abisuhan ang mga nagtitinda at ang publiko sa mga ipinagbabawal na species.

“Kaya napakahigpit ng Matnog pagdating sa law enforcement—sa fishery and law enforcement, actually yung bantay dagat namin dito [ay] 19 — naka assign yan dito sa opisina ko,” ayon kay Engr. Emmanuel de Guzman, Municipal Agriculturist ng Matnog.

Ang sinumang mahuhuling nagbebenta, bumibili o nagbibiyaha ng protected species ay mahaharap sa mulang P300,000 hanggang P1 milyon at pagkakulong na mula lima hanggang walong taon. **RNT/JGC**

<https://remate.ph/pating-na-ibinibenta-sa-palengke-sa-sorsogon-tututukan-ng-bfar/>

**REMATE:**

## **Paglalayag ng barko ng BFAR nagpatuloy kahit nasira sa pagbangga ng barko ng China**

August 27, 2024 08:18



MANILA, Philippines – Nagpatuloy pa rin sa paglalayag ang BRP Datu Sanday ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) sa kabila na napinsala ito sa pinakahuling pag-atake ng mga barko ng China Coast Guard (CCG) malapit sa Escoda Shoal sa West Philippine Sea (WPS).

Sa ulat, sinabi na binangga ng mga barko ng CCG ang barko ng BFAR na BRP Datu Sanday. Ginamitan din ito ng water cannon ng dalawa iba ang barko ng CCG na sumunod dito, saka muling binangga.

“(BFAR) vessel, BRP Datu Sanday (MMOV 3002), encountered aggressive and dangerous maneuvers from eight (8) People’s Republic of China (PRC) maritime vessels ...The CCG vessels made close

perilous maneuvers that resulted in ramming, blasted horns, and deployed water cannons against the BFAR vessel,” ayon sa NTF-WPS.

Nasira ng water cannon ang navigation at communication equipment sa mast at superstructure ng BRP Datu Sanday.

Sa loob naman ng Sanday ay nayupi ang kisame at nagkaroon ng crack ang ilang bintana.

Sa kabila nito, nagpatuloy sa paglalatyag ang barko patungo sa provision area nito. Ang pinakamatinding pinsala ay nasa kaliwang bahagi ng Datu Sanday kung saan ito binangga ng CCG 21555.

Nagagasan din ng kaparehong barko ang simbolo ng BFAR sa port side at ang starboard o kanang bahagi ng bow malapit sa pangalan ng barko. Nasira rin ng water cannon ang mga railing, rear exhaust, at ilang air conditioning units.

Ang Datu Sanday ay seven nautical miles sa timog silangan ng Escoda Shoal nitong Linggo nang atakehin ng water cannon ng China mula sa CCG vessel 4202 bandang 1:46 ng hapon.

Matapos ang pambobomba ng water cannon ay makailang ulit pa itong binangga at pinagtulungan ng mga barko ng CCG.

Ligtas naman ang lahat ng sakay ng Sanday, maging ang mga crew, BFAR officials at miyembro ng media. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/paglalayag-ng-barko-ng-bfar-nagpatuloy-kahit-nasira-sa-pagbangga-ng-barko-ng-china/>

# Marcos OKs additional budget for 100M coconut tree planting, fertilization programs

By Catherine S. Valente

August 27, 2024

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. approved the additional P1-billion budget for the Philippine Coconut Authority's (PCA) project to plant 100 million coconut trees in the country, Malacañang said Tuesday.

The President gave the greenlight to more budget for the massive planting/replanting and fertilization programs of the coconut industry during the sectoral meeting in Malacañang on Tuesday.

During the meeting, the President also approved the proposal of the PCA to increase to P2.5 billion in 2025 the fertilization program of the coconut planting project.



President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. presides during the sectoral meeting at the Malacañang Palace on Tuesday, August 27, 2024. KJ ROSALES/PPA POOL

"So that's why I'm focusing on the production side and that's what we have to increase. The critical part of that is the replanting," the President said.

PCA Administrator Dexter Buted said the additional budget of P1 billion will enable the agency to plant the 15.3 million trees in 2025.

Under the Philippine Coconut Industry Development Plan 2024-2034 (PCIDP 2024-2034), the PCA will plant/replant a total of 100 million coconut seedling in 700,000 hectares of land by 2028 all over the country to increase coconut production by 4.7 billion valued at P33.1 billion by 2034.

For this year, the PCA will plant 8.5 million seedlings, 15.3 million seedlings in 2025, and 25.4 million every year from 2026 to 2028.

The President pointed out the replanting program was an important project because of the industry's potential.

"That's why we still maintain our very high position in terms of coconut products exports because despite the fact that we have neglected the coconut industry over so many years, we still, I think we're number one pa rin," Marcos said.

"And despite the fact that we are really working with very limited raw material because nga hindi nag-replant puro matanda na 'yung mga trees natin (we did not replant and our trees are old). That's why this replanting is important," he added.

The President said there was a big market for coconut products as he expected the private sector to buy all the supply "because the market is so large and growing" and the industry has not reached the market's limit on coconut product demand.

The Department of Agriculture will also implement intercropping while farmers wait for the trees to become productive. Among the crops that will be planted include coffee, cacao and bananas.

The President also ordered the PCA to work closely with the Cooperative Development Authority to consolidate farmers' groups and associations to enable them to implement the massive planting/replanting program.

The 10-year PCIDP plan was developed to address the critical constraints of the low growth rate of the coconut industry in terms of production, low nut yield due to ageing coconut tree population, natural calamities, pests and diseases, poor farming and insufficient budget allocation.

To implement the plan, the PCA has proposed a budget amounting to P102.02 billion within the 10-year period to cover the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the PPAs.

Farmers also have meager incomes due to their very limited participation in the coconut value chain and inability to diversify to other coconut products aside from copra.

Current programs and projects in the industry are the development of hybrid coconut seed farms, nursery for planting and replanting, and research; training of farmers and their families, research, marketing, promotion; crop insurance; credit programs; infrastructure development; scholarship program; and health and medical program.

There are also farm improvements through diversification and/or intercropping, shared facilities for processing; as well as empowerment of coconut farmers' organization and their cooperatives.

The Philippine coconut industry has contributed \$3.22 billion to the country's export earnings in 2022. The figure is 43 percent of the country's total agricultural exports.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/08/27/news/marcos-oks-additional-budget-for-100m-coconut-tree-planting-fertilization-programs/1967160>



# **PHL has enough chicken despite rise in prices— DA**

Ada Pelonia

August 28, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) maintained that the country has sufficient chicken supply despite the rise in chicken prices in Metro Manila where it was sold for as much as P240 per kilogram.

“Walang issue sa supply ng manok [There’s no issue in the supply of chickens. We have enough chickens,” DA Assistant Secretary Constante Palabrica told reporters on Tuesday.

He explained that a huge percentage of consumers opted for chicken instead of pork following the rise of African swine fever (ASF) cases in the country.

“A big percentage of consumers have shifted from pork to chicken; the demand for chicken has grown and that accounts for its rising prices,” Palabrica added.

The price of chicken in Metro Manila markets ranged from P180 to P240 per kilo as of August 24, based on the price monitoring report of the department.

He also said that the price of pork would not increase due to the public’s hesitance to eat it.

“Hindi naman aakyat ang presyo ng baboy dahil nga ang nangyayari ngayon ay may scare to eat pork kaya tumaas ang presyo ng manok,” he said.

In terms of pork supply, Palabrica said there were many areas that could still supply this in the market.

“The supply is not that acute as to affect our pork supply in the market,” he said, partly in Filipino.

“We have imported pork that can balance in case of a short supply in the local market.”

Data from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) recently showed that meat imports increased by 9.64 percent to 647,745 metric tons (MT) from January to June this year, compared to the 590,766 MT recorded in the same period in 2023.

Chicken imports rose 4.13 percent to 221,598 MT from 212,811 MT while pork imports grew by 10.73 percent to 316,995 MT from the 286,275 MT recorded in the same period last year.

Beef imports recorded the biggest increase as it jumped by 29.3 percent to 84,918 MT from 65,676 MT.

“The reduction in supply caused by the continuing effects of ASF [African swine fever] coupled with El Niño most likely encouraged importers to bring in more products,” Meat Importers and Traders Association (Mita) President Emeritus Jesus Cham said via Viber.

According to Cham, the “record high” domestic retail prices of pork and chicken indicate a severe supply shortage, which “allowed beef to become more competitive.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/28/phl-has-enough-chicken-despite-rise-in-prices-da/>

# **Rice imports arrivals as of mid-Aug hit 2.65 MMT–BPI**

Ada Pelonia  
August 28, 2024

RICE import arrivals as of August 15 reached 2.65 million metric tons (MMT), according to the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI).

Figures from the attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA) showed that total rice imports from January 1 to August 15 hit 2.65 MMT.

Over 2.03 MMT of rice imports from the reference period came from Vietnam, which remained the country's top source of imported rice. This was followed by Thailand at 362,134.74 metric tons (MT).

BPI data showed that the Philippines also imported rice from other countries like Pakistan (154,523.82 MT), Myanmar (66,910 MT), and India (21,676.14 MT).

BLY Agri Venture Trading led the 154 rice importers with a total volume of 174,446.99 MT. This was followed by Orison Free Enterprise Inc. and Macman Rice and Corn Trading at 155,409.35 MT and 121,873.30 MT, respectively.

Other companies also had rice imports that reached over 100,000 MT, such as Atara Marketing Inc. at 106,756 MT and River Valley Distribution, Inc. at 102,710 MT.

Data from BPI also showed that it approved and issued 5,891 sanitary and phytosanitary import clearances (SPSICs) which covered the importation of 6.25 MMT of rice.

Rice importers should secure an SPSIC from the BPI before bringing in foreign rice stocks.

An SPSIC would certify that an inbound shipment is safe for human and animal consumption and would not bring in any pests that could be detrimental to the local agriculture sector.

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently adjusted downward its estimate of the Philippines's rice imports this year on the back of slowing purchases of Vietnam rice.

In its latest report, the USDA said that the country's rice imports this year could reach 4.6 million metric tons (MMT), lower than its previous forecast of 4.7 MMT.

The latest projection, however, is higher than the actual purchases of 3.61 MMT made last year.

“With the price quote spread narrowing, Vietnam jumped \$7 to \$559 per ton, while Thai increased slightly by \$2 to \$573 per ton with only limited demand from Indonesia and the Philippines,” the USDA report read.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/08/28/rice-imports-arrivals-as-of-mid-aug-hit-2-65-mmt-bpi/>