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MANILA BULLETIN:

Philippines, Vietnam ties making good progress—PBBM

BY [ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS](#)

Oct 9, 2024 07:43 AM

AT A GLANCE

- During their discussion, both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing the strategic partnership that both countries established nine years ago.

President Marcos said the relationship between the Philippines and Vietnam is "making good progress" as both countries committed to deepening their ties even more, particularly in trade and agriculture.



BOOSTING TIES — *President Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr. meets with Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh (left) on the eve of the 44th and 45th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summits and Related Summits in Vientiane, Laos, on Oct. 8, 2024. (PCO)*

Marcos said this as he met Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh on the eve of the 44th and 45th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summits and Related Summits in Vientiane, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) on Oct. 8.

During their discussion, both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing the strategic partnership that both countries established nine years ago.

In his remarks, Marcos said the official engagements and discussions between the Philippines and Vietnam two years ago now bear fruit.

"We have made a good deal of progress since our very first discussion and some of the engagements between our two countries. And I am very happy that we will be able to pursue that," he said.

"It gives us also the opportunity to explore new areas of cooperation and partnership. So, thank you," he added.

For his part, Prime Minister Chinh expressed Vietnam's unwavering commitment to the Philippines.

"I want to reaffirm that we always support to the strategic partnership with the Philippines. I'm glad to note that the discussions that we began two years ago have been implemented effectively," the Prime Minister said," he said.

Before concluding their discussion, President Marcos expressed his condolences for the loss of lives caused by typhoon Yagi in Vietnam and for the death of General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong on July 19, 2024, a gesture appreciated by the Vietnamese leader.

The Philippines and Vietnam have signed various agreements including rice trade cooperation, incident prevention in the South China Sea, agriculture, and cultural cooperation.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/10/9/PH-vietnam-making-good-progress>

MANILA BULLETIN:

Cagayan under state of calamity due to ‘Julian’ damages

BY [FREDDIE LAZARO](#)

Oct 8, 2024 01:12 PM

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan – This province has been placed under a state of calamity due to the damage caused by super typhoon “Julian” last week.



Cagayan Provincial Board Member Vilmer Vloria said the provincial board approved the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council recommendation declaring a state of calamity on Monday.

Rueli Rapsing, officer-in-charge of the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, said Cagayan sustained P793,683,218.21 in initial damage from Julian – P791,393,873.21 in agriculture, P2,186,145 in livestock, and P103,200 in infrastructure.

Rapsing said that the declaration would enable the provincial government to use P36 million from its quick response fund to assist residents affected by Julian.

The island-town of Calayan, Cagayan was earlier placed under a state of calamity after Julian left more than P100 million in infrastructure damage and a still undetermined amount of damage in agriculture.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/10/8/cagayan-under-state-of-calamity-due-to-julian-damages>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

NFA to lower palay buying price to P23-P25

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

October 9, 2024 | 12:00am



Farmers thresh their newly-harvested palay on October 6, 2024.

STAR / Cesar Ramirez

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MANILA, Philippines — The National Food Authority (NFA) is set to bring down its palay buying price to a range of P23 to P25 per kilo as part of the government's bid of reducing retail prices of rice while ensuring farmers get substantial profit.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. revealed in a Senate committee on agriculture and food hearing yesterday that the NFA Council has approved the lowering of the grains agency's buying price.

The new price range would begin in a week's time, said Tiu Laurel, who chairs the NFA council, the agency's highest policy-making body.

The new price range is well within the NFA's Price Range Scheme (PRICERS) for its palay procurement which ranges from P23 to P30 per kilo.

“World prices are going down and the price of rice will not go down in the market if the buying price of the traders and government is still high,” Tiu Laurel told reporters yesterday.

“At P23 per kilo, farmers would still earn a profit. In fact, at P21 per kilo they already earn a profit. So we are managing everything, we are not forgetting our farmers,” Tiu Laurel added.

The NFA presently buys palay at a range of P27 to P28 per kilo. Since implementing the PRICERS in April, the NFA adjusts its buying price range to be able to compete with the prevailing prices being offered by private traders.

The higher buying rice range allows the grains agency to beef up its buffer stock that is used for calamity relief operations.

“As part of the whole system, we have to tame the price of palay to give way for cheaper rice and for us to be able to budget properly our fund (for buffer stocking). At a lower buying price, we will be able to procure more and help more farmers,” NFA administrator Larry Lacson said.

The NFA saw its palay procurement in July surge to over 11,000 metric tons (MT), thanks to higher buying prices despite the onset of the lean season.

The NFA said it purchased about 11,212 MT of palay or unmilled rice from local farmers, higher by more than 2,800 percent than the 383.65 MT it bought in the same month of last year.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/10/09/2391069/nfa-lower-palay-buying-price-p23-p25>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

DA urged to focus on African swine fever in 2025 budget

By: [Jown Manalo](#) - Reporter / [@jownmanaloINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 04:34 PM October 08, 2024



File photo shows personnel of the Department of Agriculture (DA)-Central Luzon vaccinating a pig against African swine fever in San Simon town, Pampanga province recently. (Photo courtesy of DA-Central Luzon)

MANILA, Philippines – The Department of Agriculture (DA) should put focus more on the African swine fever (ASF) issue in its proposed budget for 2025, Senator Nancy Binay said on Tuesday.

Binay, during he DA budget hearing said the department should specify all [ASF-related expenses](#) as a separate line item, pointing out that ASF remains a concern in the country.

“Isn’t it that our problem with ASF seems like it will last for a while? I think it might be better to have a specific line item dedicated to ASF because this problem appears to be an ongoing concern,” Binay said in Filipino. Binay stated the line item for ASF will address all concerns related to the issue, including vaccine procurement and other necessary measures to combat ASF.

“Perhaps that line item could include the procurement of the ASF vaccine and anything related to addressing ASF,” she added.

“Fastbreak”

During the hearing, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Constante Palabrica revealed that some farmers are engaging in “fastbreak”, or selling of ASF-infected pigs in the market.

“They’re quickly selling the pigs instead of declaring them. So, when they see pigs that are no longer eating, they sell them, which is why the disease is spreading,” Palabrica bared in Filipino. Hence, to curb the cases of ASF in the country and avoid “fastbreak”, the DA is incentivizing the surrender infected pigs.

Sows, or “inahin” are priced from P8,000 to P10,000, Palabrica added.

However, the DA noted that the funds meant to incentivize farmers take one month before they are released.

“The DA has already increased the compensation for sows from P8,000 to P12,000. But based on a study, it takes about a month before the payment is released to those who wish to declare. It goes through a process,” said Palabrica.

The DA official added that the funds are currently subtracted from the Quick Response Fund (QRF), a reserve fund used for relief and rehabilitation during disasters and calamities.

The DA earlier proposed a budget of P157.6 billion, with P112.26 million allocated for the Office of the Secretary, P16.7 million for attached agencies, and P28.6 million for attached corporations.

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1990879/fwd-da-urged-to-prioritize-asf-in-2025-budget>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Navy bent on defending PH territory after latest Chinese harassment

By: [Priam Nepomuceno](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine News Agency](#) / 07:39 PM October 08, 2024



The BRP Sierra Madre, a Navy warship that now serves as military outpost, keeps watch over Ayungin (Second Thomas), located within the country’s exclusive economic zone in the West Philippine Sea. (Philippine Daily Inquirer/Niño Jesus Orbeta)

MANILA – The Philippine Navy (PN) has assured its commitment to protecting the country’s territorial integrity amid the [latest Chinese aggression](#) against a Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) ship in the Bajo de Masinloc (Scarborough Shoal).

Reports said a China Coast Guard Vessel used a water cannon against the BFAR ship BRP Datu Cabaylo (MMOV-3001), which was providing fuel and other supplies to Filipino fisherfolk in the area on Tuesday.

“We’re concerned about that. We will continue supporting the (Philippine) Coast Guard and BFAR, we will continue performing our mandate of patrolling the West Philippine

Sea (WPS). We will ensure that the integrity of our territory is intact,” PN spokesperson for the WPS Rear Admiral Roy Vincent Trinidad said in a press briefing in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

No other details of the incident were available as of this posting.

As this developed, the PN said its Sept. 30 to Oct. 6 monitoring data showed that a total of 190 assorted Chinese ships were spotted in various locations in the WPS.

“For the period from 30 September to 06 October, a total of 190 various vessels were monitored in the WPS, of w/c (which include) 28 PLAN (People’s Liberation Army Navy) and CCG vessels were in Ayungin, Sabina and Scarborough/BdM (Bajo de Masinloc) Shoals. Emphasis is given to these three features as they are very important in protecting our EEZ (exclusive economic zone),” the PN said in its update.

Unlike in previous monitoring reports, the PN did not give specific details on the locations of these Chinese ships.

However, the 190 ships detected for the Sept. 30 to Oct. 6 period are significantly lower compared to the 251 vessels spotted from Sept. 26 to 30.

“Their continued illegal presence in the WPS blatantly disregards the 2016 Arbitral Tribunal ruling, violates our sovereignty and sovereign rights and highlights the need to modernize the defense and security capabilities of the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines),” the PN said.

It added the military remains committed to upholding international law and defending the integrity of its national territory. (*PNA*)

<https://www.inquirer.net/416835/navy-bent-on-defending-ph-territory-after-latest-chinese-harassment/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

NFA sets palay buying price at P23-P25 per kilo

October 8, 2024 | 8:35 pm



Sacks of palay or unmilled rice are seen inside a National Food Authority (NFA) warehouse in Balagtas, Bulacan.

— PHILIPPINE STAR/MIGUEL DE GUZMAN

THE National Food Authority (NFA) said it set the buying price of palay (unmilled rice) at between P23 and P25 per kilogram for dry and clean grain.

“Our pricing mechanism is a range, so the NFA will implement (a buying price) of about P23 to P25 per kilogram,” NFA acting Administrator Larry R. Lacson told reporters on Tuesday.

Earlier, the NFA Council approved a palay buying price between P23 to P30 per kilo for dry and clean palay and P17 to P23 per kilo for fresh palay.

“It’s not really an abrupt going down in price... In about eight to 10 days the buying price will go down,” he added.

The NFA is tasked with purchasing domestically grown rice and hold it in reserve in the event of shortages or calamities.

“At P23 per kilo, the farmer is still able to profit... So we are managing that we don’t forget our farmers,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. told reporters.

The NFA earlier increased the buying price for palay to compete with prices offered by traders.

“World prices have gone down a bit and the price of rice in the market will not fall if the buying price of traders and the government remains high,” Mr. Laurel said.

Mr. Lacson added that the new pricing is part of the government’s effort to tame the price of palay, possibly leading to a fall in prices charged by millers.

“We have to tame the price of palay to pave the way for cheaper rice,” he said.

He added that the NFA will be able to procure more rice for farmers at the lowered price.

The NFA hopes to purchase up to 8.7 million bags of palay before the end of the year, equivalent to up to 435,000 metric tons (MT) of palay.

In the first half, the NFA paid P5.3 billion to purchase 175,000 MT of palay, equivalent to 3.5 million bags.
— **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/10/08/626627/nfa-sets-palay-buying-price-at-p23-p25-per-kilo/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

S. Korean agricultural equipment firms setting up shop in Cabanatuan

October 8, 2024 | 8:35 pm



THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Tuesday that it will build an agricultural machinery manufacturing complex in Cabanatuan in partnership with the Korea Agricultural Machinery Industry Cooperative (KAMICO).

“They will be constructing the first agri-machinery manufacturing and assembly line in the Philippines. This is the first in the country for this type,” Agriculture Assistant Secretary and Spokesperson Arnel V. de Mesa told *BusinessWorld* on the sidelines of a Senate budget hearing.

He added that about 30 South Korean agricultural equipment companies are expected to operate from the Korea Agri Machinery Industry Complex.

The DA said that complex hopes to stimulate manufacturing, enhance crop quality, increase farmer incomes, and produce agricultural machinery tailored to Philippine conditions.

“So... they can also help the Philippines, they have decided to invest here in an assembly plant,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said.

The DA and the KOICA signed a Memorandum of Understanding to build the facility in Nueva Ecija’s largest city.

“It’s about 20 hectares in Cabanatuan that will house the investments coming from the Korean companies,” Mr. De Mesa said.

The site will also host research and development and training facilities.

Mr. De Mesa said the site will be developed in phases over 10 years.

“This includes the initial assembly line, then manufacturing, and then lastly the research and development to adapt the products to local conditions,” he added.

He said that the facility is expected to start construction before the end of the year.

“We are just fixing the permits, documents, and other arrangements. So, we’re hoping to break ground before the year ends,” he said. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/10/08/626628/s-korean-agricultural-equipment-firms-setting-up-shop-in-cabanatuan/>

BUSINESS WORLD:

Meat imports from Turkey suspended after foot and mouth disease outbreak

October 8, 2024 | 8:34 pm



REUTERS

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it has temporarily banned meat from Turkey made from animals prone to contracting foot and mouth disease (FMD).

In Memorandum Order No. 42, the DA cited reports of an FMD outbreak in Turkey.

Turkish authorities reported to the World Organisation for Animal Health an outbreak of FMD affecting domestic cattle in September.

FMD is highly transmissible and causes lesions and lameness in cattle, sheep, goats and other cloven-hoofed animals. The disease does not affect humans.

“There is a need to prevent the entry of FMD to protect the health of the local animal population,” the DA added.

It added that all shipments coming from Turkey already in transit, loaded, or accepted at port will be allowed provided that the animals from which the products were derived were slaughtered or produced before Aug. 26.

The DA said that it also suspended the processing, evaluation of the application and issuance of Sanitary and Phytosanitary import clearances of meat from Turkey.

In October 2023, the DA lifted the ban on imports of poultry and its byproducts from Turkey after birds there were declared free of H5N1 Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza or bird flu. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/10/08/626626/meat-imports-from-turkey-suspended-after-foot-and-mouth-disease-outbreak/>

REMATE:

BFAR ship binomba ng tubig ng China vessel sa Bajo de Masinloc — PH Navy

October 8, 2024 13:52



MANILA, Philippines- Binomba ng Chinese vessel ng water cannon ang isang barko ng Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) sa Bajo de Masinloc (Scarborough Shoal) sa West Philippine Sea (WPS), ayon sa Philippine Navy nitong Martes.

“Yes, we were informed of a water cannon incident in Bajo de Masinloc by the Chinese Coast Guard vessel towards a BFAR vessel,” pahayag ni Philippine Navy spokesperson Rear Admiral Roy Vincent Trinidad sa isang press briefing.

Base sa Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) public affairs office, natanggap ang impormasyon hinggil sa insidente nitong Martes ng umaga.

“Because of that, we would like to politely defer to the BFAR for their official statement on the issue,” dagdag ni Trinidad.

Sa kasalukuyan ay wala pang komento si BFAR spokesperson Nazario Briguera ukol dito. Ayon sa ulat, naka-deploy umano ang barko ng BFAR upang mamahagi ng mga suplay sa mga mangingisdang Pilipino sa lugar.

Wala pa ring komento ang Chinese Embassy in Manila tungkol dito.

Ang Bajo de Masinloc, tinatawag ding Panatag Shoal at Scarborough Shoal, ay saklaw ng 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone ng Pilipinas.

Inaangkin ng Beijing ang halos kabuuan ng South China Sea kabilang ang mga parteng inaangkin din ng Pilipinas, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, at Brunei.

Noong 2016, pinaboran ng international arbitration tribunal sa Hague ang Pilipinas kaugnay ng pag-angkin ng China sa South China Sea, sinabing wala itong legal na basehan.

Patuloy naman ang pagbalewala ng China sa desisyong ito. **RNT/SA**

<https://remate.ph/bfar-ship-binomba-ng-tubig-ng-china-vessel-sa-bajo-de-masinloc-ph-navy/>

REMATE:

Agri damage sa bagyong Julian, lumobo sa P607M

October 8, 2024 09:49



MANILA, Philippines – Umakyat na sa P607.38 milyon ang halaga ng pinsala sa agrikultura sa bansa dahil sa pananalasa ng Bagyong Julian.

Sa bulletin na inilabas ng Department of Agriculture (DA), 10.1% na mas mataas ang naturang halaga sa P551.81 milyong iniulat ng DA noong Oktubre 4.

Nasa 33,110 ang bilang ng mga apektadong magsasaka mula sa Cordillera, Cagayan Valley at Ilocos, habang nasa 25,407 metric tons ng agricultural commodities ang napinsala mula sa 17,344 ektarya ng lupain.

Bigas ang pinakanapuruhan sa pinsalang 70% o P427.65 milyon ng kabuuang halaga.

Sinundan ito ng imprastruktura sa P100 million, kung saan P92.68 million ang irrigation facilities. *RNT/JGC*

<https://remate.ph/agri-damage-sa-bagyong-julian-lumobo-sa-p607m/>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Agriculture's march into irreversible regression

MIDWEEK COMMENTS

By Marlen Ronquillo

October 9, 2024

AS far back as the previous century, cargo-oriented seaports and airports had been envisioned as vital components of a thriving agriculture sector. The fine print and the spirit of the Agriculture and Fishery Modernization Act (AFMA) in the late 1990s specifically mentioned the need to create special zones for agriculture and fisheries that would be clustered around major seaports and airports. Implied in the plan to create special agri and fishery zones was this: the AFMA would boost agricultural and fishery development to a level that would transform the Philippines into an agricultural export powerhouse. And an export powerhouse precisely needed those cargo-oriented seaports and airports so Philippine producers could easily move their food exports speedily and efficiently into the global market.

My faltering senior memory can still recall the acronym of those planned agri and fishery export zones within the dream of an export powerhouse. They would go by the name of Zopads — Zones of Agriculture and Fishery Development that would be backstopped by cargo-oriented seaports and airports.

As we all know, underfunding waylaid the grand dreams of the AFMA, which was totally expected of a country that year in and year out pledges total support for agriculture, only to renege on that promise through the relegation of agriculture to a tertiary priority in the budgetary scheme of things. Can we blame the House-Senate

contingent that framed and pushed for the passage of the AFMA for the underfunding of the grand dreams of that milestone law for agri modernization? No, if you know that until now, the executive branch still dictates the budget process, and the congressmen and senators are left with the marginal task of just reviewing the original NEP, or National Expenditure Program, originally written by the executive branch. The executive branch, this is the hard — and weird — reality in the Philippines, does not merely propose a yearly national budget. It dictates the thrust and direction of the whole process. This is a bit off-topic, but it is a reality: congressmen and senators who defy a vengeful administration can be denied of their pork barrel allocations.

As the first quarter of the 21st century is about to end, you may want enlightenment on this issue. Is the grand plan of the current Department of Agriculture (DA) mandarins to build 17 seaports across the country finally related to the dream of the AFMA framers to create thriving agri and fishery zones clustered around major seaports and airports? Are the DA mandarins envisioning a situation where the Philippines, now finally an export powerhouse, would be shipping traditional and high-value crops and other foodstuffs into ports across the seven seas? Just like the grand vision laid out by the AFMA framers?

The depressing answer is a big "No." Sad to say, the decision to attract bidders for the planned 17 seaports is a tacit admission on the part of the feckless DA that it has failed entirely on the mandate to boost agricultural productivity. The seaports are envisioned to facilitate the easy handling and processing of agri imports, not exports. Build them so the imports will come. Depressing but true. The rationale for building seaports is so depressingly wackadoodle that we have to question whether there should be pride in publicly announcing the plan to bid out seaports. That should be a source of shame and eternal embarrassment, not pride. The "we have to build ports to lower costs of food imports" rationale is a tacit admission that we will forever be a nation that exports people to earn precious hard currency, then buys its basic foodstuff

overseas. Export people, import food. Is there any other policy equation that is more dispiriting than that one?

The building of ports is also a tacit admission of the utter incompetence of the current DA mandarins, led by a billionaire who was given marching orders to turn around the sad state of things in the sector. A tacit admission of the DA's inexorable march to regression. The DA mandarins claimed that planned seaports would primarily serve agricultural inputs such as fertilizer, which is indeed a major import item related to agriculture. But it failed to state the obvious, that the seaports would primarily serve the orgy of profit-motivated, greed-driven rice importation. As of end-September, roughly 3 million metric tons of rice had been shipped into the country, primarily from Vietnam. It is projected that the country will have imported around 4 million MT of rice by end-December. That would be a historic high. We were the biggest rice importer in 2023, and we will notch that same embarrassing record this year. It is projected that in 2025, we will remain the world's biggest rice importer. This year, the country will also be a major importer of yellow corn, pork, fish and other major foodstuffs. Meat exporters like Brazil are now paying extra attention to Philippine meat imports, given the failure of the DA mandarins to rein in the African swine fever epidemic. We import atis, patis and toyo, perhaps the indicator of to what lows the country's sclerotic agricultural sector has sunk. On the export front, our niche role as the second or top exporter of bananas and coconuts is now history.

The P40 billion seaports that the DA will build under Bagong Pilipinas will be monuments not to the sector's renaissance and dynamism but to its utter incompetence and regression.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/10/09/opinion/columns/agricultures-march-into-irreversible-regression/1981149>

THE MANILA TIMES:

Chinese use water cannon on BFAR ship

By Francisco Tuyay and Philippine News Agency

October 9, 2024

A CHINESE vessel reportedly fired a water cannon at a ship of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in the shallow lagoon in Bajo de Masinloc (Scarborough Shoal), a ranking Philippine Navy official said on Tuesday.

But Philippine Navy spokesman Rear Adm. Roy Vincent Trinidad failed to provide the incident date of the renewed water cannon attack.

"Yes, we were informed of a water cannon incident in Bajo de Masinloc by the Chinese coast guard vessel toward a BFAR vessel," Trinidad said in a press briefing in Camp Aguinaldo.

The information of the water cannon attack was mentioned while military officials were holding a defense communication meeting early Tuesday morning.

Trinidad said they would defer to the BFAR to make an official statement on what has become an increasingly commonplace act of aggression on the part of Chinese vessels in the South China Sea.

Bajo de Masinloc, also called Panatag or Scarborough Shoal, is located 124 nautical miles off Masinloc, Zambales, and is considered within the Philippines' 200-nautical-mile exclusive economic zone.

But Beijing claims almost all of the South China Sea, a conduit for more than \$3 trillion of annual shipborne commerce, including parts claimed by the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia and Brunei.

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In 2016, an international arbitration tribunal in Hague ruled in favor of the Philippines over China's claims in the South China Sea, saying that it had "no legal basis."

China has not recognized the decision.

Trinidad said the Navy was committed to protecting the country's territorial integrity amid the latest Chinese aggression.

"We're concerned about that. We will continue supporting the [Philippine] Coast Guard and BFAR. We will continue performing our mandate of patrolling the West Philippine Sea (WPS). We will ensure that the integrity of our territory is intact," Trinidad said.

As this developed, the Navy said its September 30 to October 6 monitoring data showed that a total of 190

assorted Chinese ships were spotted in various locations in the WPS.

Amid the tension in the SCS, six allied nations hosted by the Philippines and backed by the United States were set to participate in "Samasama 2024," a maritime exercise in the waters of the West Philippine Sea.

Ens Cyrus Anthony Ramos, public affairs officer of the Northern Luzon Command, said countries from France, Japan, Canada, Australia, the United States and the host Philippines would sail shoulder-to-shoulder in the waters in the West Philippine Sea.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/10/09/news/national/chinese-use-water-cannon-on-bfar-ship/1981215>

THE MANILA TIMES:

DA gives intervention worth P1B in Cagayan

By Leander C. Domingo

October 8, 2024

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan — The province of Cagayan has received a P1 billion worth of agricultural intervention from the Department of Agriculture, the DA Regional Field Office 2 (DA-RFO2) said on Monday.

DA-RFO2 executive director Mary Rose Aquino said the interventions were distributed to farmers, fishermen and organized groups in the province.

"The funds were taken from the General Appropriations Act of 2024 Dry Season under the rice, corn and high value crops programs," Aquino said.

She said it was the Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. who personally distributed the interventions during a ceremony in Minanga Sur village in Iguig town.

Aquino said the secretary also noted that Cagayan province compliments the rest of the provinces in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) which is endowed with rich agricultural and natural resources and has the longest coastline in the country with almost 73 percent.

This is in addition to the region's large rivers and their tributaries, lakes, creeks and streams which are also rich fishing and aquaculture grounds.

Aquino said the secretary awarded P459.2 million worth of agricultural machinery and other interventions from rice, corn and high-value crop programs to District 1 in Cagayan; P330.7 million to District 2; and P228.7 to District 3 for a total of P1,018,814,562.74.

During his recent visits to Cagayan Valley region, Laurel said he envisions a future where farmers in the country thrive through improved farming practices.

He said he has yet to see farmers equipped with advanced knowledge and equipment and tools to optimize yields and overcome challenges contributing to a food-secure and self-sufficient Philippines.

Meanwhile, the DA also rolled programs in the province such as payout of agricultural insurance; AgriPuhunan and Pantawid Program for 20 farms; DA Dos Chicken, a chicken breed produced by DA-RFO2; fuel subsidy and distribution of rehabilitation assistance to farmers affected by Typhoons Enteng and Carina.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/10/08/regions/da-gives-intervention-worth-p1b-in-cagayan/1980416>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

NFA to lower palay buying price to P23 by next week

Ada Pelonia

October 8, 2024

THE National Food Authority (NFA) will lower its buying price for palay to P23 per kilo by next week, according to Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

“I agreed with [NFA Administrator Larry Lacson] to bring down to P23 the price of palay by next week,” Laurel said during the Senate deliberations on the DA’s proposed budget for 2025.

“But of course, we have to inform the farmers first so they won’t be shocked by our move,” he added.

Laurel said that as of today, the buying price for palay is around P26 to P27 per kilo.

The Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. (PCAFI) said that with the ongoing harvest, a P23 per kilo buying price could bring down retail rice prices.

“Main crop harvest is still ongoing which is expected to result in an increase in our current supply of rice. This condition including the NFA buying of P23 per kilo is expected to bring down the retail price of rice to the benefit of consumers,” PCAFI President Danilo Fausto told the BusinessMirror.

He noted that on the side of farmers, having a P20 to P23 per kilo buying of palay would result in a gross average per-hectare revenue of P80,000 to P100,000, which is “acceptable during wet season.”

However, Fausto said that farmers could recover during the dry season with 50 to 75 percent increase in revenue if irrigation, fertilization and use of hybrid seeds would be adopted.

The Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) said the current farmgate prices of palay range from P15 to P17 per kilo for wet and fresh while P18 to P21 per kilo for clean and dry.

“Okay ang P23 to P25 per kilo na floor price ng NFA for dry,” SINAG Executive Director Jayson Cainglet told the BusinessMirror.

However, Cainglet noted that the grains agency’s buying price for wet and fresh unmilled rice should be at least P17 to P20 per kilo.

“[The government should] ensure funds so the NFA can compete to buy palay,” he said.

For this wet season, the NFA said it plans to buy between 6.4 million and 8.7 million bags of palay. It has sought from the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) the immediate release of P9 billion of rice procurement funds to increase its war chest to around P11 billion.

Meanwhile, the grains agency recently raised its selling price of rice to P38 a kilo from P25 per kilo to the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and other government agencies.

According to the NFA, it is set to rake in P557.3 million in additional revenues from the hike in the price of rice sold to other agencies.

“The higher selling price agreed to by the DSWD will help not only reduce NFA losses but also give it additional resources to buy more palay from our farmers,” Laurel said in a statement.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/08/nfa-to-lower-palay-buying-price-to-p23-by-next-week/>

BUSINESS MIRROR:

The El Niño crisis: A call for urgent irrigation reforms

BusinessMirror Editorial
October 9, 2024

The country experienced one of the strongest El Niño episodes in nearly half a century this year. The Department of Agriculture (DA) announced in August that the El Niño-induced droughts in 15 regions damaged farm goods worth P15.3 billion. (See, “Report: Farmers lose P15.3B due to El Niño,” in the BusinessMirror, August 5, 2024). Task Force El Niño said in May that 276 cities and municipalities declared a state of calamity due to the impact of droughts not just on agriculture but also on the health of residents.

Suffering the brunt of the weather phenomenon was the crops subsector, which usually accounts for half of the agriculture sector’s output at any given time. The damage sustained by the sector this year compares with the impact of the episode in 2015 and 2016. A report published by the World Bank titled “Striking a Balance: Managing El Niño and La Niña in Philippines’ Agriculture,” indicated that the El Niño event nearly a decade ago lasted for 18 months, affected about a third of the country and caused \$327 million in agricultural production losses.

The report indicated that the Philippines experienced seven El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) events since the 1980s. Unlike in previous decades, however, the intervals between ENSO events are becoming shorter in recent years. Prior to the El Niño episode in 2015, the Philippines was struck by the weather phenomenon in 2009, which lasted until 2010 and destroyed billions of pesos worth of farm products.

This has made it an imperative for policymakers to look for mechanisms that will enable farmers to cope with the ill effects of El Niño. One idea that had been pitched by the Department of Agriculture (DA) is to build peripheral canals that will allow rainfall to be channeled to farmlands instead of just letting the water go straight to the sea via flood control structures. (See, “Govt keen on irrigation scheme to boost food output,” in the BusinessMirror, October 7, 2024). The DA said it is planning to work with other agencies such as the Department of Public Works and Highways to deliver badly needed irrigation to local farms.

The Philippines, according to government officials, gets around 2.6 meters of rainfall annually. However, it has yet to fully exploit the potential of rainfall to augment the country's water supply. Sans an efficient way of collecting rainfall and faulty flood control programs, flooding occurs in many parts of the country whenever it experiences heavy rainfall due to the southwest monsoon or typhoons.

Policymakers should focus their efforts on production areas that are badly in need of water. Of the total irrigable areas of 3.128 million hectares nationwide, 65 percent or 2.042 million hectares have irrigation facilities as of 2021. (See, "NIA: Projects expanded PHL's irrigated areas," in the BusinessMirror, June 2, 2022). Delivering irrigation to the remaining one million hectares of farms where staples such as rice and high value crops can be planted should be the government's top priority if it intends to make food more affordable.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/10/09/the-el-nino-crisis-a-call-for-urgent-irrigation-reforms/>

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON:

DA hinimok, bidding ng BFAR pangasiwaan

October 9, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Hinimok kahapon ng isang abogado si Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. na personal na pangasiwaan ang nalalapit na proseso ng bidding sa Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) para sa mga malalaking proyekto na nagkakahalaga ng bilyong piso.

Umapela rin si Atty. Faye Singson kay Laurel na agad na imbestigahan ang mga nabanggit na alalahanin at gumawa ng naaangkop na mga hakbang upang matiyak ang isang patas at walang kinikilingan na proseso ng bidding na naka-iskedyul sa Okt. 10 at 11.

Ang mga proyekto sa ilalim ng Bid Reference Nos. 2024-62 at 2024-63 ay kinabibilangan ng pagkuha ng multi-mission offshore vessels, refrigerated cargo vessels, at steel-hulled fishing vessels.

Ang kabuuang badyet ng proyekto ay umaabot sa mahigit ₱2.1 bilyon, tulad ng--Bid Ref. No. 2024-62, pagkuha ng 50-meter at 80-meter steel hull na multi-mission at multi-purpose vessels (ABC: P 1,500,000.00) na may nakatakdang bidding sa Oktubre 10, 2024; Bid Ref. No. 2024-63, pagkuha ng 23.5-meter steel hull fishing vessels, 62-Footer FRP boat at fishing gears (ABC: P665,965,900.00) na may nakatakdang bidding sa Oktubre 11, 2024.

Sinabi ni Singson, dating assistant prosecutor ng Office of the Ombudsman, na si BFAR acting head Isidro Velayo Jr. MDM, ang namuno sa bids and awards committee meeting noong Setyembre 11 at 12, 2024 na nagresulta sa pagpapalabas ng supplemental bid bulletin No. 2 na may petsang Setyembre 12, 2024.

“Ang integridad ng pampublikong pondo ay mahalaga,” ayon sa abogado.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/metro/2024/10/09/2391230/da-hinimok-bidding-ng-bfar-pangasiwaan>