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**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# **UAE and Philippines: Partners in progress**

**BY [MANILA BULLETIN](#)**

Dec 1, 2024 11:20 PM

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**By H.E. Ahmed Al Sayegh, Minister of State to the United Arab Emirates (UAE)**

The natural, organic shape of the Bangkóta (coral reef) design at the Philippines Pavilion will have captivated you if you had the privilege of visiting World Expo 2020, held in Dubai.

Over the course of the spectacular international showcase, this futuristic, well-defined, free-flowing, open space of connectivity drew tens of millions of visitors from all over the world, displayed the archipelago's unique and varied biodiversity and beauty, and served as a microcosm of the Philippines' dynamic, vibrant culture.

It also spoke to both our nations' shared ambitions for a sustainable future – one built on the firm foundations of a strong 50-year partnership, and consolidated through our countries' joint commitment to climate action announced throughout the UAE's hosting of the 28th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 28).

Today, the UAE is home to more than 200 nationalities, including approximately 700,000 Filipinos in the UAE, living together in peace and harmony, and stands out as one of the most diverse and secure countries in the world.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s inaugural visit to the UAE this week reflects our deep bond and close partnership with the Philippines. During his meeting with His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, UAE President, both sides addressed the potential for the UAE and the

Philippines to further strengthen ties in line with sustainable development goals, and across a variety of different fields.

At the heart of our historic relationship is the transformation of trade. The UAE is a dynamic and thriving economic environment, and as a gateway to the Middle East, offering Filipino businesses a wealth of opportunities.

The Philippines is a key strategic partner for the UAE and a high-growth economy in the heart of a rapidly growing region. In 2023, trade volumes between our two countries reached nearly \$2 billion, and we believe this number is set to grow significantly.

Over the last year alone, the UAE and the Philippines have signed six Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) in various fields, paving the way for even greater collaboration.

Working together, we are advancing an ambitious trade and investment agenda in the form of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Upon completion, we expect this comprehensive free trade agreement to enhance trade in goods and services, promote deeper economic collaboration, spur tremendous growth, and positively affect the lives of millions of people in both countries.

Furthermore, we are confident this will accelerate two-way economic flows for the advantage of Filipino businesses, which will be able to see the benefits of reduced or eliminated tariffs, access to global markets and new business opportunities.

The UAE's economic business environment is characterized as dynamic, prosperous, and attractive to direct foreign investment; it ranks first amongst Arab nations and holds an advanced position globally as a modern financial, trading, and economic hub. Our economic strategies are designed to secure a sustainable future beyond oil, with CEPAs serving as a key cornerstone. Central to this vision is our nation's commitment to cultivating an innovation-led knowledge economy, positioning us at the forefront of scientific and technological advancement. This is reflected in UAE's world class infrastructure, globally recognized financial center, and business-friendly environment, all of which establish our country as a premier destination for international trade and investment.

That is why we are particularly excited about the potential and possibilities of growing our relationship with the Philippines and partnering in sectors such as infrastructure, railways, renewable energy, real estate, and health.

Both of our nations clearly have their sights set on the future. Consider the field of space exploration. In December 2022, our respective space agencies agreed to cooperate on joint research and development and data mobilization for disaster management, emergencies, food security, and agriculture.

Our ambitions also prioritize synergizing our strengths to build sustainable food systems here on Earth. In this regard, the UAE Ministry of Climate Change and Environment is cooperating closely with the Philippines Department of Agriculture in the areas of soil science and management,

biotechnology, post-harvest transactions, and irrigation and water resources. The priority ambition being to build sustainable food systems together.

Environmental cooperation also extends through the renowned UAE-based non-profit Clean Rivers, which is playing a key role in tackling plastic pollution in Manila's Pasig River Urban Development project, itself established in 2023 to clear and revive the vital waterway.

In an era of emerging climate-related threats, disaster resilience and preparedness stand out too as key focus areas in our alliance. As part of the UAE's continuous humanitarian efforts to support all countries during times of crisis, the UAE was the first country to dispatch a plane carrying relief aid to the Philippines in response to landslides and floods caused by Typhoon Carina.

The aid effort, under the directives of President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan not only demonstrates the dedication of the UAE to the values of solidarity and partnership, but also reflects the country's support and strong appreciation for the Filipino community living in the UAE, who contribute to the development and growth of the country. As we enter the second half century of bilateral relations between our two countries, our bonds of friendship and fraternity stand at historic highs and incorporate new, innovative and diverse domains.

Just as the Philippines Expo Pavilion reminded the world of the flourishing and robust relationship that exists between our nations, the same can be said of this week's remarkable meeting between our respective leaders.

It spoke to the higher purpose of a relationship built over half a century and, most crucially, laid the solid groundwork for a promising future of greater collaboration and progress

[https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/1/uae-and-philippines-partners-in-progress#google\\_vignette](https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/1/uae-and-philippines-partners-in-progress#google_vignette)

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# DA: 300,000 MT rice wasted yearly

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

December 2, 2024 | 12:00am



Workers unload sacks of rice from a delivery truck along Dagupan Street in Tondo, Manila on January 22, 2024.

Ernie Penaredondo / The Philippine STAR

MANILA, Philippines — At least 300,000 metric tons of rice are wasted each year, according to Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., as he backed proposed bills to promote half-cup servings.

“With around 300,000 tons of rice wasted annually, selling half-cup rice servings offers a practical way to reduce wastage. Eating rice wisely is a responsibility we all share,” he said.

Tiu Laurel emphasized the importance of adopting sustainable practices, adding that proposed national bills are set to play a crucial role in promoting responsible rice consumption and reducing wastage across the country.

Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) development communication division head Hazel Antonio-Beltran cited data from the Department of Science and Technology-Food and Nutrition Research Institute from 2018 to 2019 which showed that daily rice wastage per household averaged 53 grams of cooked rice.

Beltran said that the passage of a law will play a crucial role in promoting responsible rice consumption and reducing wastage across the country.

She said that nine provinces, 21 cities and 17 municipalities have already passed ordinances mandating food establishments to offer half-cup rice servings on their menus.

She maintained that these ordinances are not about limiting consumption but about offering choices.

“Many Filipinos struggle to finish a full cup of rice. Providing smaller portions and cutting the price would benefit everyone who wishes to avail smaller portions and help prevent waste while respecting individual preferences,” Beltran added.

According to Beltran, the DA and PhilRice will also propose to President Marcos to issue an executive order to encourage food establishments nationwide to adopt similar practices, ensuring a more sustainable approach to rice consumption.

“With support from the Private Sector Advisory Council, we are working toward expanding the implementation of half-cup servings, particularly in government offices and events, in the near future,” Beltran said.

Meanwhile, Beltran said that the country has saved at least P3.6 billion worth of uncooked rice due to reduced rice wastage nationwide.

Beltran said using the 2020 population as a reference, this translates to reduction in uncooked rice wastage from almost two tablespoons (nine grams) per person in 2009 to one tablespoon (six grams) per person in 2024.

“Despite the significant savings, the amount of rice wasted could still sustain 2.79 million people for a year. This highlights the need for stronger advocacy on responsible consumption,” Beltran said.

She said that as part of its efforts to reduce wastage, the institute conducted the “Half-Cup, Full-Heart” challenge to encourage Filipinos to order smaller rice portions and promote mindful consumption to reduce wastage.

The initiative also involved engaging food establishments to offer half-cup rice servings as an option to help reduce uneaten leftovers.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/12/02/2404407/da-300000-mt-rice-wasted-yearly>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Galunggong prices remain high despite imports – group

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

December 2, 2024 | 12:00am



**“We are puzzled that despite the importation, the retail price of round scad is high. It is still more than P200 per kilo,”** SINAG chairman Rosendo So said in a radio interview.

Michael Varcas / File

MANILA, Philippines — The retail price of round scad or galunggong remains high despite the importation of 30,000 metric tons (MT) of fish, farmers’ group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) said yesterday.

**“We are puzzled that despite the importation, the retail price of round scad is high. It is still more than P200 per kilo,”** SINAG chairman Rosendo So said in a radio interview.

Based on monitoring of the Department of Agriculture (DA) in Metro Manila markets, the retail price of local round scad ranged between P240 and P320 per kilo and imported round scad, between P200 and P260 per kilo.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. has approved the additional importation of 8,280 MT of frozen small pelagic fish after he previously allowed the importation of 30,000 MT of fish.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources said the closed fishing season in fish spawning areas in the country started in November and will end mid-March 2025.



The volume of fish imports this year is eight percent higher than the 35,000 MT imported in 2023.

The sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance for the additional fish import volume will be issued until Dec. 16, and fish imported during these SPSICs must arrive in the country Jan. 30 next year.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/12/02/2404415/galunggong-prices-remain-high-despite-imports-group>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Focus on exports

**BUSINESS SNIPPETS - Marianne Go - The Philippine Star**

December 2, 2024 | 12:00am

Federation of Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry Inc. (FFCCCII) president Cecilio Pedro hopes that government officials would focus on increasing the country's self-sufficiency next year in the face of possible tariffs threats from the United States with the expected takeover of the government by president-elect Donald Trump.

In an interview, Pedro lamented the fact that even though the Philippines is basically an agriculture producing country and also manufactures some products, "we have somehow lost out to our neighbors and competitors...we have lost out so much, talo na tayo..."

Thus, at the very least, he said, "We should at least be self-sufficient and stop imports," pointing out that "we are now the biggest rice importer in the world, we are exporting so much sugar but now we are importing sugar. We are importing corn. We are even importing pork and chicken. Sana maging sufficient naman tayo...they (government) should focus on doing something to be self sufficient, self sufficiency first."

As such, Pedro is urging the government to "sit down and let's identify first what we need to be self-sufficient. And then the other side is what can we export?" He pointed out that in the past, the Philippines' top export was coconut. Unfortunately now, he said, the Philippines is down to number three or four in the export of coconut products.

Pedro stressed the reality that "we are facing a new president in the US, Trump...who said put America first...everything else is No. 2...so he's out to enhance the competitiveness of America at the expense of the world...the first thing he will do is to impose tariffs on China or Mexico or Canada or any other country that would be exporting to the US... so it will hinder the growth economies of those countries...so that will also affect the world...in the big major countries, more so China. When China slows down, it will also affect us. China is our biggest trading partner."

10=[-export to the US under a preferential trade regime. "We have to identify it. Pay attention to what we are good at and let's focus on what we are good at. Let's say they give us a preferential trade on a particular product, let's focus on those products and assist the manufacturers or business and businessmen in those areas so we can export more."

With the recent confirmation of Trade Secretary Ma. Cristina Aldeguer-Roque, Pedro is hopeful that the Trade department can work on identifying Philippine products that could be export winners.

Pedro is thankful that remittances from overseas Filipino workers continue to support the local economy.

“OFW remittances are good because they send so much money home.”

However, even remittances from US-based OFWs may face headwinds in the future if the proposal of US vice-president-elect JD Vance and US Rep. Kevin Hern to impose a 10 percent fee on remittances out of the US is enacted into law.

According to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), personal remittances from Overseas Filipinos (OFs) grew by 3.3 percent to \$3.34 billion in September 2024 from the \$3.23 billion registered in September 2023. The expansion in personal remittances was due to higher remittances from land-based workers with work contracts of one year or more and sea- and land-based workers with work contracts of less than one year.

Correspondingly, cumulative remittances in January-September 2024 increased by three percent to \$28.07 billion from the \$27.24 billion recorded in January-September 2023.

Of the personal remittances from OFs, cash remittances, which were coursed through banks, reached \$3.01 billion in September 2024, higher by 3.3 percent than the \$2.91 billion posted in September 2023. The growth in cash remittances in September 2024 was due to the growth in receipts from land- and sea-based workers.

Cash remittances rose by three percent to \$25.23 billion in January-September 2024 from the \$24.49 billion registered in January-September 2023.

Pedro noted that the US proposal to tax remittances, aside from being a tool supposedly to penalize illicit activities such as human and drug smuggling, is also intended to help the US raise revenues. “I’m not surprised because they also need money. They are also in a deficit.”

### **FFCCCII assistance**

The Filipino-Chinese business community, however, Pedro said, continues to do its part in helping the country through its various outreach programs which include education through its barrio school classroom program, fire brigade program, medical outreach and typhoon relief assistance program through the Magkaibigan Foundation.

The FFCCCII, Pedro said, puts up 300 to 400 barrio school classrooms throughout the country every year. The umbrella organization is represented by almost 180 chambers of commerce scattered all over the country from Tawi-Tawi all the way up to Aparri.

“We build one-story classroom buildings. It’s a twin classroom, two classrooms with a CR at the back. We have plenty of far-flung communities. We built classrooms for them through the community chamber of commerce and with the cooperation of the local government... about 550,000 as of now... at a cost of P700,000 to P800,000 per unit,” he said.

Their second project is the volunteer fire brigade which now has 170 plus fire trucks scattered all over the country and more than 5,000 volunteers to fight fires. The firetrucks, Pedro said, depending on size, cost from P3 million to P5 million, second hand. A brand new firetruck can cost as much as P10 million. The pilot project was started in Manila and has spread out to other cities. They also get firetruck donations from Taiwan and China.

Their third project is a medical outreach program which every week sends out teams to remote areas and urban poor communities to give medicines, medical treatments and dental services.

The fourth project is the Magkaibigan Foundation which helps typhoon and fire victims. Pedro revealed that for this year alone, the FFCCCII has spent up to P65 million to acquire rice as per the suggestion of Sen. Imee Marcos who said that victims need the rice more than canned goods which are the common donations.

“So we focus now more on rice. Because rice is the key. So we bought a lot of these five kilo rice which is distributed to the individual families.”

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/12/02/2404313/focus-exports>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# **DILG, Metro mayors tapped for rice-for-all implementation**

**Bella Cariaso - The Philippine Star**

**December 2, 2024 | 12:00am**

MANILA, Philippines — To ensure the success of the Rice-for-All program, the Department of Agriculture (DA) will tap the assistance of the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and Metro Manila mayors.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said yesterday the availability of rice at P42 per kilo in the markets would start once the agreement with the DILG and mayors in the National Capital Region is finalized.

De Mesa said the DA is also eyeing the services of the Food Terminal Inc.

“The FTI is tasked with the logistics and distribution of rice. It is possible that the FTI will manage directly,” he said. According to De Mesa, the DA can also seek the help of associations and farmers’ cooperatives that manage the operations of Kadiwa stores.

De Mesa said the retail price of the staple remains high despite the implementation of Executive Order 62, which reduces rice tariff to 15 percent from 35 percent.

“There is a big increase in the price (of rice because) of the retailers and wholesalers,” De Mesa said.

He said the passage of the Rice Tariffication Law removed the regulatory power of the National Food Authority.

De Mesa maintained that the P42-per-kilo rice is not a band-aid solution.

“Based on our projection, it can be sustained. We will focus on the program to make sure it will be sustained,” he said.

The government allocated P5 billion for the Rice-for-All program

**<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/12/02/2404351/dilg-metro-mayors-tapped-rice-all-implementation>**

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

## **Group laments artificially low sugar prices**

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 02:05 AM December 02, 2024

The United Sugar Producers Federation of the Philippines (Unifed) is seeking the government's immediate intervention to arrest the decline of sugar prices, which it says comes at the expense of local farmers.

In a statement, Unifed said the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) should intervene "as soon as possible ... to unmask the culprits who are playing us."

"We need the DA and SRA's intervention to prop up sugar prices at a comfortable level to prevent further losses especially now when there is also the issue of sugar purity that has gone down due to the long drought," Unifed president Manuel Lamata said.

"If the government will come in and hopefully start buying our sugar, we will only sell directly to the government and they can sell directly to the people, eliminating these traders until prices stabilize," he added.

Lamata said they have observed a "huge drop" in milling prices, with losses averaging P100 per 50-kilogram bag (LKg) of sugar last week.

According to Unifed, millsite prices averaged P2,500 per LKg last Thursday, far from sugar farmers' expected price of P2,800 per LKg.

"This is artificial pricing. Somebody is playing with the market and an immediate intervention to curb the downtrend in sugar prices is very much needed," the group said.

Lamata said traders wanting to profit big from this artificial pricing "should be exposed" as retail prices remained stable despite the decrease in milling prices.

## 'Erratic' prices

The group has observed that sugar prices “have been erratically dipping and increasing contrary” to the prevailing trend in supply and demand since the beginning of the milling season.

Unifed said the continued downtrend in prices would severely affect small farmers, which comprise more than 80 percent of sugar producers nationwide.

SRA administrator Pablo Luis Azcona said last week that wholesale and retail prices were stable, but farmers' prices have been volatile despite the country maintaining a stable inventory.

Data from the SRA showed that sugar price at the millsite level totaled P2,671.52 per LKg as of Nov. 17, an increase of 4.18 percent from P2,564.21 per LKg in the same period a year ago.

In Metro Manila markets, refined sugar retailed from P74 to P90 per kilogram as of Nov. 27, slightly lower than P80 to P100 per kg last year, according to the DA's price monitoring.

Brown sugar was priced from P65 to P85 per kg, also lower than P72 to P96 per kg previously. INQ

<https://business.inquirer.net/493441/group-laments-artificially-low-sugar-prices>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Recent storms to increase cost of producing palay

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 02:06 AM December 02, 2024

The cost of producing palay (unmilled rice) could increase even if farm input prices remain unchanged as weather disturbances have slashed yields, according to Federation of Free Farmers (FFF).

“If calamities reduce yields, and costs remain basically the same, then the cost per kilo will increase, and so will the profit per kilogram,” FFF national manager Raul Montemayor said in a message to the Inquirer.

Montemayor said farm-gate prices, or the price received by farmers for selling their produce to traders, would need to go up to maintain farmers’ income despite the costs involved in producing the staple food remaining the same.

“But this may not happen if cheap imports continue to flood the market because of the reduced tariffs,” he added.

## Varying across regions

In its report, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said production cost for palay averaged P13.38 per kilogram (kg) in 2023, down by 10.7 percent from P14.98 per kg the previous year.

Among the regions, Central Visayas recorded the highest production cost at P18.70 per kg while Central Luzon had the lowest at P11.60 per kg.

The PSA said average production cost per hectare amounted to P55,814 last year, a 2.7-percent increase from P54,373.



It also said Cagayan Valley had the highest cost at P72,255 per hectare while the lowest was recorded in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao at P41,446 per hectare.

Meanwhile, net returns stood at P27,033. Central Luzon posted the highest net return of P50,198 per hectare, followed by Northern Mindanao with P42,413 per hectare.

The latest PSA report did not specify the earnings of palay farmers for every peso they invested. In 2022, the statistics agency said farmers earned an average of 20 centavos for every peso spent in cultivating the commodity.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) recently slashed its estimate for this year's palay output to 19.3 million metric tons (MT), implying that the figure could decline further following the adverse impact of typhoons on the country's agriculture production.

On the sidelines of the opening of Kadiwa ng Pangulo Expo 2024 in Pasay City held last week, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said palay production "might decrease because of the storms."

The DA had said losses averaged 500,000 MT to 600,000 MT annually due to storms and other natural calamities.

This is not the first time the DA revised its palay output projection for 2024. In October, the agency pegged the production volume at 19.41 million MT, down by 3.1 percent from a previous projection of 20.04 million MT. —*Jordeene B. Lagare INQ*

<https://business.inquirer.net/493430/recent-storms-to-increase-cost-of-producing-palay>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# New URC flour mill in Quezon seen improving supply, Agri dep't says

December 1, 2024 | 7:52 pm



OLIVIE STRAUSS-UNSPLASH

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Sunday that the opening of Universal Robina Corp.'s (URC) flour milling factory in Quezon province is expected to improve the availability of flour.

In a statement, Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said that the facility will ensure the availability of “high-quality flour, a vital ingredient in many staple food products like bread, pasta, cereals, and crackers.”

The facility, in Sariaya, Quezon, has a daily production capacity of 1,320 metric tons (MT).

URC's new flour milling facility has an annual production capacity of 297,000 MT of flour and 99,000 MT of bran and pollard, byproducts of the milling process used in animal feed.

“Flour is integral to our economy, from family dining tables to large-scale food production,” Mr. Laurel added.

The P5.4-billion mill is set to start commercial operations by January, directly employing 102 workers.

The DA said that the plant is expected to “play a key role in ensuring a stable and affordable supply of products.”

“It features a fully automated milling technology that will streamline flour production, storage, and packaging processes,” it added.

According to a report from the US Department of Agriculture, the Philippines is expected to import 7 million MT of wheat next year amid the rise in demand for both milling and animal-feed quality grain. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/01/638517/new-urc-flour-mill-in-quezon-seen-improving-supply-agri-dept-says/>

## **BUSINESS WORLD:**

# **Sugar planters warn profiteers could be behind decline in millgate prices**

December 2, 2024 | 12:11 am



PHILSTAR FILE PHOTO

SUGAR producers said millgate prices for their cane have declined since the start of the milling season, with the United Sugar Producers Federation (UNIFED) warning of possible profiteering by traders.

“We fear that this continued downtrend will have a severe impact on our small farmers which comprise more than 80% of the industry producers who are looking forward to a better holiday season especially with the increase in production inputs due to the long drought,” UNIFED President Manuel R. Lamata said in a statement.

UNIFED said prices averaged P2,500 per bag of sugar last week, compared to the 2,800 per bag farmers had been hoping for.

“Since the start of the milling season, prices have been erratically (fluctuating) contrary to the supply and demand figures, which raised suspicions that somebody is profiting from recent events,” Mr. Lamata added.

He said that despite the drop in millgate prices, the retail price for sugar remained stable.

He added that farmers should hold on to their sugar until prices stabilize.

“We may all need to tighten our belts so we will not be abused by these traders,” Mr. Lamata said.

The group also called on the Department of Agriculture and the Sugar Regulatory Administration to investigate the drop in millgate prices.

“We need the DA and SRA’s intervention to prop-up sugar prices at a comfortable level to prevent further losses especially now when there is also the issue of sugar purity, which has fallen due to the long drought,” he added.

The SRA has estimated that sugar production this crop year will drop 7.2% to 1.78 million metric tons.

He said the government could also move to buy sugar to stabilize prices.

“We will only sell directly to the government and they can sell directly to the people, eliminating these traders until prices stabilize,” Mr. Lamata said.

Low millgate prices were also reported during the previous crop year, prompting the government to allocate about P5 billion for the purchase of sugar directly from farmers. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/02/638522/sugar-planters-warn-profiteers-could-be-behind-decline-in-millgate-prices/>

## **BUSINESS WORLD:**

# **FAO eyes farm entrepreneurship projects with indigenous peoples**

December 2, 2024 | 12:03 am



REUTERS

THE Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) said it is seeking to collaborate with more farm cooperatives and associations for its agri-entrepreneurship program in the Philippines, with a particular focus on involving indigenous peoples and the youth.

“What we would like to explore is the possibility to work with indigenous peoples and also the possibility to work with youth,” FAO Country Representative to the Philippines Lionel Henri Valentin Dabbadie told *BusinessWorld*.

The FAO is also hoping to improve the agricultural economy in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

He said that FAO started its agri-entrepreneurial program to address farmer groups affected by the conflicts in BARMM. These included Christian and Muslim farmer communities.

“We are expanding to new regions, and we are also trying in the same region to diversify the beneficiaries,” Mr. Dabbadie added.

He said that the FAO typically works with community-based organizations through capacity-building and training exercises for local producers.

“We try to build the capacity of the cooperative. They are the one who serve as a relay between the farmers, and we teach the cooperative how to make cost recovery and how to serve their members better,” he added.

Mr. Dabbadie said that the FAO also tries not to resort to subsidies but favors a skills-improvement approach.

“We provide this capacity, and we provide it as part of a collective approach. So most of the time it’s with cooperatives sometimes what we do also is collective training (through) the farmer field school,” he added.

He said that the FAO also provides equipment and technical assistance to help producers tap broader markets.

“The entry point is really the market and increasing the capacity of the producers to reach those markets... there is a huge market for *pasalubong* (souvenir) products,” Mr. Dabbadie added.

Among the souvenir products produced by the FAO’s project with the BARMM were banana chips and donuts.

“I would say that you can sell any kind of product, but you need to provide value addition. (That is why) we very seldom encourage the people to sell raw products,” he said. — **Adrian H. Halili**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/12/02/638441/fao-eyes-farm-entrepreneurship-projects-with-indigenous-peoples/>

## BUSINESS WORLD:

# Russia cuts wheat exports in move to contain inflation

December 2, 2024 | 12:02 am



REUTERS

MOSCOW — Russia, the world’s largest wheat exporter, cut its 2025 export quota by two-thirds, hiked wheat-export duties and abandoned import quotas for some staple foods on Friday as the government moved to curb inflation.

The Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) Council said Russia’s export quotas for the second part of the export season from Feb. 15 to June 30, 2025, will be 11 million metric tons, down from 29 million tons in the same period this year.

The EEU comprises Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Russia and coordinates the customs and tariff policy of its members.

In a separate announcement, Russia’s agriculture ministry hiked the wheat-export duty by over 18% from Dec. 4.

“We are strengthening control over the export of agricultural products to prioritize the supply of the domestic market. These measures should stabilize the price situation,” said Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Patrushev.

Mr. Patrushev said the government encouraged retailers to set long-term contracts with producers of potatoes and vegetables while regional authorities were working with retailers to stabilize prices for butter, sugar and bread.

The government is working to increase food imports from “friendly” countries, Mr. Patrushev said, while the EEU Council said it introduced duty-free quotas for imports of potatoes, carrots, apples and butter.

Russia allows grain exports quota-free from July to January, the first half of the export season, and then implements quotas among about 260 domestic traders authorized to sell grain internationally from Feb. 15 to June 30.

Analysts expected the export-quota cut, which resulted from the high export pace in recent months and a worse-than-expected harvest due to bad weather in most Russian wheat-producing regions.

“The decision will help smooth out fluctuations in consumer prices caused by the depletion of domestic production stocks and the need to supply the domestic market through imports, and will contribute to curbing inflation,” Russia’s economy ministry said in a statement.

The measures will be closely watched by Russia’s biggest wheat buyers, Egypt, Iran, Turkey, Algeria and Saudi Arabia.

Moscow has been looking to curb exports of staple foods and boost imports as it fights inflation at 8.5%. Price growth for butter, bread, dairy products and potatoes caused particular concern.

Butter prices were up 32% this year while prices for potatoes were up almost 80% and prices for bread climbed 13%, according to official statistics.

Russia introduced wheat-export quotas in 2020 to protect the domestic market.

The Russian Grain Exporters and Producers Union expects wheat exports in 2024/2025 of 47 million to 52 million tons, which it says will be enough for Russia to remain the top wheat exporter.

“However, the food security of the people in the countries to which we supply Russian wheat and other grain products is much more important to us,” said the union’s head Eduard Zernin.

At the start of 2024, the original quota of 24 million tons was increased a further 5 million tons against the backdrop of the previous season’s record grain exports, estimated at no less than 72 million tons.

The EEU Council statement said the quota for the same period of 2024 included corn and barley, which were excluded from the quota in the coming season. — **Reuters**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/12/02/638443/russia-cuts-wheat-exports-in-move-to-contain-inflation/>



## BUSINESS WORLD:

# India's floating solar plans run into opposition from fishing communities

December 2, 2024 | 12:01 am



XAVIER SMET-UNSPLASH

MUMBAI — Early each morning, fisherman Nitin Birute casts his net into the backwaters of Jayakwadi Dam in western India, catching enough fish to feed his family and make a modest living.

But he fears his livelihood could evaporate if plans to install a huge floating solar farm on the Nathsagar reservoir go ahead.

The government is considering a project to blanket about 7,500 hectares of the 350-sq. km reservoir near the town of Paithan in Maharashtra state with floating photovoltaics, part of an ambitious push to create 500 gigawatts of renewable energy capacity by 2030 — enough to power hundreds of millions of homes in the world's most populous nation.

Details on the Jayakwadi project, which is in the early stages of planning, are not publicly available, and THDC India Limited, the state power company behind it, did not respond to requests for information about the floating solar farm's capacity, cost or when construction might begin.

Floating photovoltaics, installed on reservoirs, lakes and offshore waters, are an emerging technology that is particularly appealing to countries with limited land resources.

But their impact on nature is a topic of debate, and environmentalists have warned that they may adversely affect people who depend on fishing and agriculture.

“We depend on this water for our food and our livelihood,” said Mr. Birute, who belongs to the local Kahar community. “If they cover the water with solar panels, what will happen to the fish?”

... If there are no fish, we will have nothing left.”

About 25,000 families earn their living from the reservoir.

Earlier this year, hundreds of fisherfolk and their families protested against the planned solar farm, and one group is pursuing a legal challenge to stop construction.

India targets net zero emissions by 2070, a priority for a country that ranks among the world's most vulnerable to the extreme weather caused by climate change. The government also wants to reduce the reliance on costly fossil-fuel imports to sustain economic growth and development.

Financial institutions have committed \$386 billion to support green projects in India, Pralhad Joshi, the federal renewable energy minister, said in September.

Developing land-based solar projects in India has been delayed by land acquisition issues that are complicated by unclear records, inflated prices and potential local conflicts.

Only a small section of the reservoir will be used for the project, leaving ample space for fishing communities, said Bhagwat Karad, a lawmaker who first proposed the idea of floating photovoltaics on the Nathsagar reservoir.

A floating solar farm may help reduce water evaporation in Jayakwadi Dam, located in a region that is prone to drought, and the plant will generate inexpensive electricity for nearby residents, Karad told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

"The government will implement the project after discussions with the fishermen and will make sure that no one is left behind," Mr. Karad said.

But for Jayakwadi's fishing community, the promise of clean energy is overshadowed by fears of losing their centuries-old way of life. Long before the dam was built, their forebears fished the rivers and streams that feed Jayakwadi, one of Asia's largest earthen dams with 27 gates that regulate the flow of the Godavari River.

"They talk about saving water and producing cheap electricity, but no one is talking about what will happen to the people who depend on this water for their survival," Bajrang Limbore, a local activist leading protests against the project, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

The Kahar Samaj Panch Committee, which represents the fishing community, lost a legal case in September to stop the project on the grounds that construction is restricted in the ecologically sensitive area. The National Green Tribunal, which rules on environmental cases in India, said the group had failed to show that the law prohibits developing a floating solar farm in the area.

The group's lawyer Asim Sarode plans to take the case to the Supreme Court.

"This isn't about opposing renewable energy," Mr. Sarode said. "We all want clean energy. But it has to be done in a way that doesn't destroy people's livelihoods or harm the environment."

Jyakwadi is home to a bird sanctuary visited by migratory birds like flamingos, spoonbills and storks and 67 types of fish, including Indian major carp, a source for aquaculture at Nathsagar.

Kishor Pathak, honorary wildlife warden for the Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar area, where the dam is located, warns that the installation of solar panels could disrupt the entire ecosystem.

“The aquatic plants and animals in the dam rely on sunlight to survive,” he said. “If the panels block that sunlight, the whole food chain could collapse — from the fish to the birds that come here to feed.”

Sewage from 60 villages and the city of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar flows into the reservoir, but Mr. Pathak said aquatic life acts as a natural filter.

A hydroelectric plant on the banks of the river has been idle since December as it awaits maintenance, an engineer at the facility said on condition of anonymity.

“Why don’t they fix what’s already built before starting another project?” said the activist Limbore.

Generations of the Kahar, who were once palanquin bearers before the human-powered sedans became obsolete in India, have depended on fishing, a critical source of income for an impoverished community that lacks access to healthcare, education and housing.

“We don’t know anything else but fishing,” says Kusum Bai, an elderly Kahar woman.

“The water is sacred to us, like the holy Ganges. If they take that away, we have nothing left.” — **Thomson Reuters Foundation**

<https://www.bworldonline.com/agribusiness/2024/12/02/638386/indias-floating-solar-plans-run-into-opposition-from-fishing-communities/>

## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **Group seeks govt help to prop up sugar prices**

- Ada Pelonia
- December 2, 2024



Sugar producers called on the Department of Agriculture (DA) and Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) to roll out interventions that will halt the decline in sugar prices.

The United Sugar Producers Federation (Unifed) made the appeal after they noted a “huge drop” in milling prices, which registered an average loss of P100 per 50-kilogram bag during the previous week.

The group noted that mill prices averaged P2,500 per bag of sugar last Thursday at a time when farmers are hoping that prices will reach P2,800 per bag, which offers a slightly better margin.

“This is artificial pricing. Somebody is playing with the market and an immediate intervention to curb downtrend in sugar prices is very much needed,” Unifed President Manuel Lamata said.

“We urge the Department of Agriculture and the Sugar Regulatory Administration to intervene as soon as possible and to unmask the culprits who are playing us.”

Lamata floated “suspicions” that artificial pricing was being caused by traders who wanted to profit big to the detriment of sugar farmers, noting that these people “should be exposed.”

Despite the drop in mill prices, he noted that retail prices remain constant and will likely increase because of the upcoming holidays.

“I am also rallying the farmers to hold on to their sugar until prices stabilize; we may all need to tighten our belts so we will not be abused by these unscrupulous traders,” Lamata said.

Unifed claimed that since the start of the milling season, prices have been erratically dipping and increasing contrary to the supply and demand figures which raised suspicions that somebody is profiting from these.

“We need the DA and SRA’s intervention to prop up sugar prices at a comfortable level to prevent further losses especially now when there is also the issue of sugar purity that has gone down due to the long drought,” Lamata said.

He said this continued downward trend will cause “a severe impact” on small planters which comprise over 80 percent of the industry producers who are looking forward to a better holidays especially with the increase in production inputs because of the dry season.

“If government will come in and hopefully start buying our sugar, we will only sell directly to government and they can sell directly to the people, eliminating these traders until prices will stabilize.”

The prevailing price of refined sugar in selected Metro Manila markets reached P80 per kilo while washed sugar is being sold at P75 per kilo, based on the DA’s latest price monitoring.

Last month, Unifed urged the SRA to fasttrack the inspection of mills after its members reported lower sugar yield.

Unifed President Manuel Lamata said he “questions the integrity of mills” due to the “doubtful results” related to the sugar yield of a 50-kilo bag per ton of cane (LKGTC) from the group’s members.

“We have had truckloads of canes which reportedly have zero LKGTC as extracted by the mills which makes us suspect that something strange is going on,” he said in a statement.

In the past, he said sugar groups were allowed to send their chemists to the mills to check the accuracy of their extractions. This practice, Lamata said, has been discontinued.

While the long drought would have a negative effect on LKGTC, Lamata said “the results so far have been suspect and we urge the SRA to ensure that mill equipment are calibrated so as not to shortchange our sugar farmers.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/02/group-seeks-govt-help-to-prop-up-sugar-prices/>

## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **‘Lower tariffs to hike meat imports’**

- Ada Pelonia
- December 2, 2024

THE Philippines’s meat imports this year could reach 1.17 million metric tons (MMT), driven by extended lower tariffs levied on meat products, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

The FAO forecasts global meat trade to surge in 2024 following two consecutive years of decline, with volume expected to hit nearly 42 MMT. This is mostly owing to higher shipments of bovine meat.

It noted that the United States would likely account for over 7 percent of total import demand this year, largely due to tight supply of bovine meat from domestic sources.

“Similarly, in the Philippines, the extension of lower tariff rates on key meat products, aiming to mitigate rising meat prices, which will be applied until 2028, is likely to induce more purchases,” the FAO report read.

The international organization also forecasts the global poultry meat trade to rebound to 16.3 MMT this year due to rising import demand in key markets including the Philippines.

“In the Philippines, rising domestic chicken meat prices in local markets, driven by insufficient internal supplies, are forecast to support growth in poultry meat imports.”

In terms of world pork trade, the FAO estimates it will settle at 10 MMT in 2024. This would be driven by anticipated demand increases in the Republic of Korea, Mexico, and the Philippines.

“In the Philippines, continued challenges related to animal diseases are expected to constrain domestic supplies, resulting in higher import demand.”

The Meat Importers and Traders Association (Mita) recently said that the country's meat imports by yearend could exceed last year's record as animal diseases and bad weather crimped domestic output. (*See: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/11/25/phl-meat-imports-seen-surpassing-23-record/>*)

Mita issued the statement after figures from the Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) showed that the country's meat imports as of September 30 rose by 12.65 percent to 1.04 MMT from 923,160 metric tons (MT) a year ago.

“Meat importation breached 1 million metric tons in September, which indicates that the Philippines will break last year's record-high of 1.2 MMT,” Mita President Emeritus Jesus Cham said via Viber.

Data from BAI, an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture (DA), indicated that the Philippines imported 1.2 MMT of meat products last year. Nearly half of the volume consisted of pork products.

Cham, however, warned that the increase in shipments would not automatically offer relief to consumers, especially during the holidays due to the threat of port congestion and the impact of a weak peso on prices.

“The record-high importation is worrisome as signs of port congestion are appearing.”

According to Cham, the depreciation of the peso could increase the landed cost of imported meat products.

“Meanwhile, the successive typhoons have hurt demand and consumption and importers may not be able to raise prices enough to cover the added costs.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/02/lower-tariffs-to-hike-meat-imports/>



**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# PH saves P3.6B from reduced wasted rice

[By Janine Alexis Miguel](#)

December 2, 2024

THE Philippines saved P3.6 billion from reduced wastage of rice, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said in a statement over the weekend.

The savings were based on the current price of rice at P43 per kilogram. "Despite the significant savings, the amount of rice wasted could still sustain 2.79 million people for a year. This highlights the need for stronger advocacy on responsible consumption," PhilRice head of development communication division Hazel Antonio-Beltran said. Data from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) showed daily wastage per household averaged 53 grams of cooked rice from 2018 to 2019. Using the 2020 population as a reference, the DA estimated that uncooked rice wastage has been reduced from 9g per person in 2009 to 6g in 2024.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. pointed out the importance of adopting sustainable practices to reduce rice wastage. "With around 300,000 tons of rice wasted annually, selling half-cup rice servings offers a practical way to reduce waste. Eating rice wisely is a responsibility we all share," he said.

The DA said proposed national bills and local ordinances would play a crucial role in promoting responsible rice consumption and reducing wastage across the country. Currently, there are nine provinces, 21 cities and 17 municipalities that have passed ordinances mandating food establishments to offer half-cup rice servings on their menu.

An executive order is being prepared to encourage food establishments nationwide to adopt similar practices, ensuring a more sustainable approach to rice consumption, the DA said.

"With support from the Private Sector Advisory Council, we are working toward expanding the implementation of half-cup servings, particularly in government offices and events, in the near future," Beltran said, adding the issue was not about limiting consumption but about offering choices. "Many Filipinos struggle to finish a full cup of rice. Providing smaller portions and cutting the price would benefit everyone who wishes to avail of smaller portions and help prevent waste while respecting individual preferences," she explained.

PhilRice conducted the "Half-Cup, Full-Heart" challenge on Nov. 1-28 to encourage Filipinos to order smaller rice portions and promote mindful consumption to reduce waste.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/02/business/top-business/ph-saves-p36b-from-reduced-wasted-rice/2013835>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# Price drop worries sugar planters

By [Janine Alexis Miguel](#)

December 2, 2024

THE United Sugar Producers Federation (Unifed), the country's largest independent sugar planters' group, asked government agencies to step in amid suspicions that some traders were behind a big drop in sugar mill prices.

"We urge the Department of Agriculture (DA) and Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) to intervene as soon as possible and to unmask the culprits who are playing us," Unifed President Manuel Lamata said in a statement, pointing out an average loss of P100 per 50-kilogram bag due to artificial pricing by some traders.

These traders, Lamata explained, aim for high profits at the expense of sugar farmers.

Despite cheaper sugar mill prices, retail prices remain constant and may even rise during the holidays, further benefiting these traders, Lamata added.

He advised farmers to hold on to their sugar stocks until prices stabilize, though admitting this may be difficult for farmers who rely on weekly sales. "We may all need to tighten our belts so we will not be abused by these unscrupulous traders," Lamata said.

According to Unifed, mill prices averaged P2,500 per bag last Thursday. Farmers will then sell it for P2,800 to make a modest profit.

"We need the DA and SRA's intervention to prop up sugar prices at a comfortable level to prevent further losses, especially now when there is also the issue of sugar purity, which has gone down due to the long drought," Lamata said.

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What the government can do, he suggested, is procure sugar directly from farmers and sell it directly to the public to help stabilize prices.

Unifed said the manipulation of sugar prices threatened small farmers, who comprise 80 percent of sugar producers. These farmers are at a losing end, especially during the holiday season when production costs increase.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/02/business/top-business/price-drop-worries-sugar-planters/2013836>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# Nov. inflation likely higher at 2.5% – poll

[By Niña Myka Pauline Arceo](#)

December 2, 2024

INFLATION could have edged up in November due to a weaker peso, higher energy costs and as food prices rose in the wake of a string of typhoons that battered Luzon, analysts said.

A Manila Times poll resulted in a median estimate of 2.5 percent, slightly higher than October's 2.3 percent and near the lower end of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) 2.2- to 3.0-percent projection for the month.

The rate will remain within the central bank's 2.0- to 4.0-percent target, the analysts also said, and could prompt monetary authorities to continue lowering key interest rates later this month.

Official November inflation data will be released by the Philippine Statistics Authority this Thursday, Dec. 5.

Sun Life Investment Management and Trust Corp. economist Patrick Ella, who was the sole analyst to forecast a slowdown to 2.1 percent, indicated that the impact of recent storms would not have been enough to boost overall price growth.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. chief economist Michael Ricafort, on the other hand, said that storm damage to agricultural output would have led to inflation edging up to 2.4 percent.

Spending ahead of the Christmas holidays could have also led to "some uptick in prices," he added.

Union Bank of the Philippines chief economist Ruben Carlo Asuncion, Emmanuel Lopez from the University of Santo Tomas Graduate School, Moody's Analytics economist Sarah Tan and Bank of the Philippine Islands senior economist Emilio Neri all expect an increase to 2.5 percent.

Asuncion tagged the typhoons that hit in October and November, which affected vegetable prices and pushed up overall food costs, but added that rice inflation likely slowed further along with electricity prices and transport costs.

With 2024 inflation near the midpoint of the BSP's 2.0- to 4.0-percent target, he added that there was a strong chance the central bank's policymaking Monetary Board would again cut rates by 25 basis points (bps) later this month.

However, there's also an equal chance of a pause due to upward risks to the 2025-2026 inflation outlook, particularly from potential electricity price hikes and higher minimum wages, Asuncion continued.

Lopez, meanwhile, said that last month's expected uptick would have been largely influenced by depreciation of the peso, high prices of petroleum products and an anticipated spiraling of prices due to holiday spending.

However, he expects the peso to recover "in anticipation of [an] influx of remittances from OFWs (overseas Filipino workers)."

Tan also said that a rise in food inflation would have largely driven November inflation, with the six storms from late October to November having caused widespread flooding and damaged agricultural crops.

"Even with the lower rice tariffs, retail prices for rice would have moved higher," she said.

"Adding to the pain, utility providers upped the electricity rates in November from the prior month as they passed through some of the higher generation charges to consumers. Fuel prices for gasoline and diesel were also raised in November."

Neri echoed this, noting that the storms likely pushed up vegetable prices in November, with month-on-month increases outpacing those in October. The peso's depreciation will have also added to inflationary pressures, he said.

Neri, however, also said that slower year-on-year rice price growth due to base effects and better supply prospects, along with stable global oil prices, may have helped limit the overall rise in inflation.

"Inflation will likely remain manageable in the next six months, supported by the slower increase in rice prices and stable commodity prices amid the economic slowdown in major economies like China," he continued.

"However, we also see risks that could push inflation higher, such as weather disturbances and potential for further depreciation of the peso." Meanwhile, Pantheon Macroeconomics economist Miguel Chanco, Philippine National Bank economist Alvin Arogo and Manulife Investment Management Philippines fixed income head Jean Olivia de Castro all saw inflation hitting 2.6 percent.

Chanco said a reacceleration in food inflation, mainly due to base effects, and an easing in transport deflation that reflected in part a recent increase in fuel prices, would all have driven inflation higher.

Arogo pointed to higher holiday demand and the impact of recent typhoons, but added that "the combination of lowered rice tariff, downtrend in Vietnam rice prices, and buffer provided by the favorable CPI (consumer price index) movement last September should keep inflation comfortably within the 2.0-4.0 percent target range of BSP for the remainder of the year."

Inflation markedly slowed to 1.9 percent in September. Average inflation as of end-November was 3.3 percent.

"This would support a 25-bps rate cut in December," Arogo said.

De Castro, for his part, said that storms would have pushed prices higher, but added that the government's move to lower tariffs on rice imports would have "drastically improved the inflation outlook."

"Looking ahead, we continue to expect a favorable impact from a continuous decline in rice prices as the full effects of the tariff rate cut have yet to fully filter through retail rice prices," he added.

Chinabank Research said inflation could have accelerated 2.8 percent, driven by a surge in vegetable prices due to the recent storms.

"Upward price pressures also stemmed from higher prices of other key food items such as fish, meat, and eggs, as well as increases in LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) and fuel prices and electricity rates," it added.

Rice and food prices, on the other hand, likely fell in November, Chinabank Research said.

Metrobank Research, which had the highest inflation projection of 2.9 percent, said that this would be due to bad weather and global oil market disruptions.

It said that "costs of agricultural goods, particularly vegetables, rose month-on-month after an unprecedented series of typhoons hit the country in the past weeks."

"Rice prices, on the other hand, decreased though on a slower pace compared to the preceding month on lower tariffs, slightly offsetting harvest disruptions," it added.

"Persistent upside pressure on inflation could drive the BSP to re-evaluate the pace of its easing cycle."

BSP Governor Eli Remolona Jr. last month said that inflationary pressures could prompt a pause when the Monetary Board meets on Dec. 19.

However, he also said that weaker economic growth — the third quarter saw a marked slowdown to 5.2 percent from 6.4 percent three months earlier — was grounds for continued easing.

The Monetary Board began lowering interest rates in August, starting with a 25-bps cut that was replicated in September.

The BSP's benchmark rate currently stands at 6.0 percent.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/02/business/top-business/nov-inflation-likely-higher-at-25-poll/2013842>

**ABANTE:**

## **P5B Quezon flour plant, pantukod sa food security – DA**

Abante News

- **December 1, 2024**



Makatutulong sa food security ng bansa ang tinayong P5.4 bilyong planta ng harina ng Universal Robina Corp. ng mga Gokongwei sa lalawigan ng Quezon, sabi ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

May kakayanan ang flour mill na gumawa ng 1,320 toneladang harina kada araw. Sabi ng Department of Agriculture, kaya ng plantang gumawa ng 297,000 toneladang harina sa loob ng isang taon at 99,000 toneladang bran at pollard na magagamit sa mga pakain sa hayop.

“Flour is integral to our economy, from family dining tables to large-scale food production,” sabi ni Tiu Laurela sa plantang itinayo sa 10 ektaryang lupa sa Saria-ya, Quezon.

Ayon sa DA, fully automated ang planta at mas simple ang prosesong ginagamit nito sa produksyon, storage at packaging.

Mahalaga ang papel ng planta sa pagpapalakas ng agricultural value chain. Aniya, magandang ehemplo ang URC para sa private sector na naglalayong makatulong sa national development.

(Eileen Mencias)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/12/01/p5b-quezon-flour-plant-pantukod-sa-food-security-da/>