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**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Government to set up Kadiwa stores selling P40/kilo rice at LRT, MRT stations

BY [AARON RECUENCO](#)

Dec 4, 2024 03:41 PM

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The Department of Agriculture will soon set up Kadiwa stores at the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) and Light Rail Transit (LRT) stations to expand the reach of affordable rice to as many Filipino consumers.

DA Assistant Secretary Genevieve Guevarra said MRT and LRT stations are among the areas where the Kadiwa stores are planned to be expanded and will feature kiosks that will sell P40 per kilo rice.

She said the Kadiwa stores at LRT and MRT stations would be available between 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. “The objective is provide affordable rice options for consumers and help curb high retail prices,” said Guevarra who heads the Kadiwa program.

Initially priced at P45 per kilo, grains sold under the Rice-for-All program has been reduced to P43 recently.

Guevarra said the price will be reduced further starting Thursday to a more affordable rate of P40 a kilo as part of efforts to shield consumers from inflationary pressures.

Aside from MRT and LRT stations, Guevarra said Kadiwa stores will also be set up in major public markets in Metro Manila.

Among them are Kamuning Market, Malabon Central Market, New Las Piñas City Public Market, Pasay City Public Market, Balintawak Market, Cartimar Market, Pateros Grace Marketplace, Maypajo Public Market and Paco Market.

DA Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. earlier ordered the deployment of Kadiwa ng Pangulo kiosks to major public markets to force rice retailers and unscrupulous traders who refuse to pass onto consumers the benefit of lower rice prices.

He added that this will reinforce President Marcos’ approval of an additional P5 billion budget to support the P29 and Rice-for-All programs.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/4/kadiwa-stores-lrt-mrt-stations>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# PH aiming for ‘big plans’ on trade, says Marcos

BY [RAYMUND ANTONIO](#)

Dec 4, 2024 11:03 PM

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**President Marcos on Wednesday, Dec. 4, touted the “big plans” the Philippines has in building up its trade and commerce ties with partner-countries.**



President Ferdinand ‘Bongbong’ Marcos Jr. meets with World Trade Organization (WTO) Director General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in Malacañan on Wednesday, Dec. 4, 2024. (Photo from the Presidential Communications Office)

The Chief Executive met with World Trade Organization (WTO) Director General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala to highlight the country’s “big plans” to strengthen its trade partnerships with WTO members.

“We have big plans and I think one of the many things that we picked up from the conference just like Davos with interactions with other leaders and other countries, is that it really requires transformation. But trade has become more important than ever,” Marcos said during the meeting.

He also underscored how trade became more significant as the country rose from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

For Iweala’s part, the official commended the Philippines for its strong economic performance despite current global challenges.

“I want to start by congratulating you because I was looking at the numbers of the economy. And you are not doing badly at all,” she said.

“Six percent per annum growth rate in an environment of high inflation in the world, low growth rates. So I think the Philippines is doing reasonably well under the circumstances,” the WTO chief added.

Iweala is in the Philippines to meet with the secretaries of Finance, Trade, and Agriculture.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/4/ph-aiming-for-big-plans-on-trade-says-marcos>

**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# Chinese ships fire water cannon, sideswipe PH vessels in Bajo de Masinloc - official

BY [MARTIN SADONGDONG](#)

Dec 4, 2024 10:37 AM



A China Coast Guard ship fires water cannon at a Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) vessel in Bajo de Masinloc, West Philippine Sea on Dec. 4, 2024. (Courtesy of National Task Force for West Philippine Sea)

Tensions flared anew in Bajo de Masinloc (Scarborough or Panatag Shoal) after Chinese ships allegedly fired water cannon and intentionally struck Philippine vessels that were patrolling in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) on Wednesday, December 4.

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) conducted a routine maritime patrol in the vicinity of the shoal to support Filipino fishermen when they encountered “aggressive actions” from the China Coast Guard (CCG) and People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy, according to PCG spokesperson for West Philippine Sea (WPS) Commodore Jay Tarriela.

Tarriela said that three CCG ships with bow numbers “5303,” “3302”, and 3104” as well as PLA Navy vessels with bow numbers “500” and “571” ganged up on the PCG and BFAR vessels around 6:30 a.m.

“At around 6:30 a.m., CCG 3302 fired a water cannon at the BRP Datu Pagbuaya (MMOV 3003), aiming directly at the vessel’s navigational antennas while it was located 16 nautical miles south of Bajo de Masinloc,” Tarriela said.

“Following this hostile action, CCG 3302 intentionally sideswiped the BRP Datu Pagbuaya on its starboard side. Shortly thereafter, at 6:55 a.m., CCG 3302 launched a second water cannon attack on the same vessel,” he added.

As if not contented, BRP Teresa Magbanua “faced blocking, shadowing, and dangerous maneuvers” from PLA Navy vessel 500 and CCG 503 while BRP Cabra was subjected to “reckless maneuvers” by CCG 3104 at a close distance of 300 yards.

The PCG has yet to disclose if there was any damage sustained by the PCG and BFAR vessels.

PCG vessels are also armed with water cannons but Coast Guard Commandant, Admiral Ronnie Gil Gavan previously stated that it should only be used to save lives at sea, including in firefighting scenarios, and not to harm other people.

Just recently, China has submitted a chart to the United Nations (UN) which depicts the baselines of what it claims as its territorial waters around Bajo de Masinloc.

Bajo de Masinloc lies within the 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ), about 124 nautical miles from Masinloc, Zambales. This means that Filipinos have the sovereign rights to explore and exploit its natural resources.

However, China claims the area as part of its territorial waters in the South China Sea even if its dash-line claims have already been debunked by a 2016 arbitral ruling.

Tarriela reaffirmed the PCG’s commitment to protect the rights and safety of Filipino fishermen within the country’s maritime jurisdiction with the BFAR.

“We will continue to be vigilant in safeguarding our national interests in the West Philippine Sea,” he said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/4/chinese-ships-fire-water-cannon-sideswipes-ph-vessels-in-bajo-de-masinloc-official>



**MANILA BULLETIN:**

# China says it was PH that rammed into its ship

BY [JOSEPH PEDRAJAS](#)

Dec 4, 2024 05:27 PM

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China on Wednesday, Dec. 4, claimed it was the Philippine vessel that rammed into the larger Chinese ship in the waters off Scarborough Shoal.

While many countries already condemned China for ramming the Philippine vessel, China maintained they were not the one that did so.

The Chinese Embassy in Manila said it was a Philippine vessel that supposedly “intentionally rammed into a CCG (Chinese Coast Guard) ship” in the waters off Scarborough (known in China as Huangyan Dao), prompting the agency to warn Manila to immediately stop its supposed infringements as well as inflammatory actions.

And when China eventually fired water cannon at the Philippine vessels, they did so “lawfully to control the situation,” the embassy quoted CCG spokesman Liu Dejun as saying.

Tensions flared anew in Scarborough after Chinese ships allegedly fired water cannon and intentionally struck Philippine vessels that were patrolling in the West Philippine Sea on Wednesday. The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) conducted a routine maritime patrol in the vicinity of the shoal to support Filipino fishermen when they encountered “aggressive actions” from the China Coast Guard (CCG) and People’s Liberation Army (PLA) Navy, according to PCG spokesperson for West Philippine Sea (WPS) Commodore Jay Tarriela.

Meanwhile, several countries spoke out against China’s actions.

US Ambassador to Manila MaryKay Carlson said China’s “unlawful use of water cannons and dangerous maneuvers disrupted a Philippine maritime operation,” and put people’s lives at risk.

“We condemn these actions and stand with our likeminded friends, partners, allies in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific,” Carlson said.

The ambassadors of the Netherlands and New Zealand also voiced their concern.

Dutch Ambassador Marielle Geraedts said the incident was concerning, while New Zealand Ambassador Catherine McIntosh shared the embassy’s stand that what China did was as “deeply worrying” as the presence of the PLAN in the waters.

<https://mb.com.ph/2024/12/4/china-says-it-was-ph-that-rammed-into-its-ship>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# **New fiscal targets and the anti-agricultural economic sabotage law**



[ENERGY, INFRA AND ECONOMICS - Bienvenido Oplas Jr.](#) - The Philippine Star

December 5, 2024 | 12:00am

Three topics here and we go straight to the numbers and facts.

## DBCC new fiscal targets

Last Monday Dec. 2, the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) released their updated medium-term, 2024-2028 macroeconomic growth and fiscal targets. The DBCC is composed of DOF Secretary Ralph G. Recto, NEDA Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan, DBM Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman, and BSP Governor Eli Remolona.

The revenue targets are P4.38 trillion in 2024 or 16.5 percent of GDP, to P6.25 trillion in 2028 or 17 percent of GDP.

The disbursement or spending targets are P5.91 trillion in 2024 or 22.3 percent of GDP, to P7.62 trillion in 2028 or 20.7 percent of GDP.

The budget deficit targets are P1.52 trillion in 2024 or -5.7 percent of GDP, to P1.37 trillion in 2028 or -3.7 percent of GDP.

In 2023, revenues were P3.82 trillion or 15.7 of GDP, disbursements were P5.34 trillion or

21.9 percent of GDP, and deficit was P1.51 trillion or -6.2 percent of GDP. So there were improvements in 2024 over 2023 – higher revenues, lower spending, and lower deficit as percent of GDP. And things would further improve on the way to 2028.

As an advocate of small government, small taxes and bureaucracies, I find the updated fiscal targets still high, like a deficit higher than -3 percent of GDP by 2028. But the behavior of many agencies both national and local, the behavior of the public themselves seeking more subsidies and freebies even without economic, finance or health crisis, make drastic reduction in spending, deficit and borrowings highly improbable.

Thus I find the compromise targets of the DBCC as practical and realistic. I particularly support the corporate income tax cut under CREATE MORE law pushed by DOF Secretary Recto, the spending cut under the proposed National Government Rightsizing Program (NGRP) bill pushed by DBM Secretary Pangandaman. These two measures should help expand the investment and corporate tax-base and reduce wastes and corruption in government. They will help expand the GDP size, the denominator, so that deficit/GDP and debt/GDP ratio should decline, slowly but consistently.

The Anti-agriculture economic sabotage (AES) law

Last Tuesday Dec. 3 I attended the Stratbase forum, “Strengthening Resilience for Food Security: Collaborative Strategies Against Agricultural Economic Sabotage” held at the AIM Conference Center in Makati. Focus was implementation of “Anti-Agricultural Sabotage Act” or RA 12022, signed into law only last Sept. 26. The law intends to control large-scale smuggling, hoarding and profiteering of agricultural products including tobacco.

The speakers were DA Assistant Secretary Felicizimo Madayag Jr., DOJ ASec Randolph Pascasio, DOF Revenue Operations Group Atty. Emee Macabales, BIR National Investigation Division Atty. Mary Gretchen Mondragon, NBI Cybercrime Division Atty. Van Homer Angluben, PNP Director for Intelligence PBGen Westrimundo Obinque, PCG Commander for Maritime Security Law Enforcement Command Robert Patrimonio. Host was Ms. Nikki de Guzman of TV5.

The DA official spoke about the need for border controls, partnership of national enforcement agencies with local government units and people’s organizations. The DOJ official admitted that out of 547 Customs cases only 23 percent reached the courts, and out of 192 agriculture smuggling cases only five percent resulted in prosecution. And DOJ was improving their procedures to secure higher convictions.

The DOF, BIR, NBI, PNP and PCG officials followed up with their own measures to control smuggling and illicit trade of agriculture products into the country. Such illegal products not only can harm public health but they harm public finance, they pay zero or little taxes while annual public expenditures keep rising.

I checked the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) latest trade data, January-September 2024 vs January-September 2023. Here are some numbers for agriculture products: animal and vegetable oils and fats, fruits and vegetables, feeding stuff for animals (excluding unmilled cereals), dairy products – they have over \$1 billion imports each in 2024 and registered positive percentage growth over 2023 levels.

But these products experienced decline in importation: fish and fish preparations down to \$494 million or -9 percent; beverages and tobacco manufactures down to \$379 million or -17 percent; and tobacco unmanufactured \$225 million or -12 percent.

Perhaps the smugglers of fish and tobacco products sensed that the anti-AES bill was nearing enactment into law, they hastened their non- or under-declaration of agriculture imports.

#### The GB-BEM smuggling case

Among the prominent cases a few years ago about large-scale tobacco smuggling was GB-BEM Cigarette Co. Inc operating as a cigarette manufacturer inside Clark Ecozone. When the BIR raided it in Feb. 5, 2020, they found 1.65 million packs of cigarettes supposedly for export to Malaysia but lacking tax stamps, GB BEM was registered with PEZA but not with the BIR as excise taxpayer, the estimated unpaid excise tax from 2017 to 2020 was P14.05 million. Plus many reports that its cigarettes were sold in Central Luzon.

See these reports, “BIR strike team shuts down illegal cigarette maker in Clark ecozone” (DOF website, April 6, 2020), “BIR promises to remove export cigarettes’ tax-stamp exemption” (BusinessWorld, March 1, 2021), “PEZA probes 2 cigarette makers without BIR registration” (BusinessWorld, March 8, 2021).

Then last Nov. 20, 2024, the First Division of the Court of Tax Appeals (CTA) promulgated a Decision acquitting PEZA-registered GB BEM Cigarette Co. Inc., and its officers. The CTA cited a number of technicalities that the BIR strike team failed to produce to secure conviction.

I think the lesson here is that technicalities and not substance, like the operation for several years of non-BIR-registered cigarette company, non-payment of excise tax for big volume of manufactured cigarettes, were resorted by the CTA. The BIR and DOF, the tobacco tax-dependent agencies like PhilHealth and potential health beneficiaries, are the losers.

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2024/12/05/2405015/new-fiscal-targets-and-anti-agricultural-economic-sabotage-law>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# DA rolls out P40/kilo rice in LRT, MRT stations

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

December 5, 2024 | 12:00am



DA Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said the P40 per kilo rice would be rolled out in other areas.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — Starting today, rice at P40 per kilo will be available in two stations of the Metro Rail Transit (MRT) and Light Rail Transit Line 1 (LRT-1) as well as five markets in Metro Manila, the Department of Agriculture (DA) announced yesterday.

DA Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa said the P40 per kilo rice would be rolled out in other areas.

Kadiwa kiosks at the MRT North Avenue station and LRT-1 Monumento station will sell well-milled rice at P40 per kilo, according to DA Assistant Secretary for agribusiness, marketing and consumer affairs Genevieve Velicaria-Guevarra.

It will also be available at Guadalupe public market in Makati, Kamuning market in Quezon City, Malabon Central Market, New Las Piñas City public market and Pasay City public market.

It will be available from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. from Tuesday to Saturday.

“The number of public markets (selling P40 per kilo of rice) will eventually increase as local government units are interested in setting up Rice-For-All outlets,” Guevarra said.

She assured the public that DA officials tasted the rice to ensure that consumers would patronize it.

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2024/12/05/2405061/da-rolls-out-p40kilo-rice-lrt-mrt-stations>

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# Palace reviews bill restoring NFA power to sell rice

[Bella Cariaso](#) - The Philippine Star

December 5, 2024 | 12:00am



NFA Eastern Visayas regional office in Palo, Leyte.

[PNA.gov.ph](#)

MANILA, Philippines —

House ways and means committee chairman and Albay Rep. Joey Salceda said it is up to the President whether to veto some of the provisions of the proposed measure.

The RTL or Republic Act 11203 removed the mandate of the NFA to sell rice in markets.

Enacted in 2019, the RTL allows unlimited entry of imported rice to the country in a bid to keep prices low due to increased supply.

NFA administrator Larry Lacson said Malacañang already sought the comment of their agency on the proposed amendments to RTL.

Under the proposed measure, the NFA will be allowed to sell its buffer stock to the public through Kadiwa outlets during food security emergency situations to help stabilize rice prices.

“I hope we will be allowed even for limited (volume). My estimate is between 16,000 and 20,000 metric tons a month. If I compute it, if it covers 1,600 municipalities and cities, that’s only 200 bags per month (for each municipality)... At least, the public can have an option to buy P38 (per kilo). Unlike now, we are pressured to bring down the retail price to P40 per kilo,” Lacson explained.

He noted that the NFA’s current stocks are pegged at 5,389,000 bags of rice.

“I already told (Agriculture) Secretary (Francisco) Tiu Laurel (Jr.) and he is in favor (of selling NFA rice in the markets) as it will free up our warehouses. Farmers are complaining that we stopped buying (palay) from them. We did not stop. Our problem is the warehouses, as our warehouses in certain areas are already full,” he explained.

Lacson noted that NFA rice is currently sold to the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Office of Civil Defense.

“For this year, despite the successive typhoons, we were able to release a total of 600,000 bags,” he said.

He added there will be healthy stock management of NFA rice once the agency’s function of selling rice to the public is restored.

Marcos has certified as urgent the proposed amendments to the RTL, citing the need for the government to have control over or influence the local rice market.

Another proposed amendment to the RTL seeks to increase the annual appropriation for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund to P30 billion from the current P10 billion.

At least P9 billion of the P30 billion will be allocated for rice farm machinery and equipment; P6 billion for rice seed development, propagation and promotion and P15 billion for programs, activities and projects that will most effectively promote farmers’ productivity, supply resiliency and address food security emergency situations on rice.

Meanwhile, Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa maintained that the half-cup of rice should be an option for customers.

De Mesa was reacting to the statement of Restaurant Owners of the Philippines president Eric Teng who expressed concern about the actual execution of the half-cup rice serving, saying it may result in further wastage if the rice will not be sold.

“What we are pushing is to offer half-cup as an option. They may need to adjust in the beginning as from one cup rice, there will also be half-cup rice serving. I don’t think it will be a very big issue in terms of wastage as (customers) can consume half-cup,” he said at a press conference.

With at least P3.6 billion worth of rice wasted annually, Tiu Laurel is pushing for the revival of a proposed measure mandating restaurants, hotels, canteens and eateries to serve half-cup rice.

“Why will you order one cup (when you cannot eat the entire rice)? Actually, that’s the logic of the Philippine Rice Research Institute and the secretary,” De Mesa stressed.

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/12/05/2405096/palace-reviews-bill-restoring-nfa-power-sell-rice>



**THE PHILIPPINE STAR:**

# China ship blasts Philippines vessel with water cannon

[Michael Punongbayan](#), [Mark Ernest Villeza](#) - The Philippine Star

December 5, 2024 | 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Utilizing water cannons and dangerous blocking maneuvers, China Coast Guard (CCG) and military vessels again harassed Philippine vessels in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) early yesterday morning.

The National Security Council (NSC) said the latest attacks happened just 16 nautical miles south of Panatag (Scarborough) Shoal, also known as Bajo de Masinloc.

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) were conducting a routine maritime patrol in the vicinity to support Filipino fishermen actively engaged in fishing in the area when the harassment happened, according to NSC Assistant Director General Jonathan Malaya.

“During this operation, our vessels encountered aggressive actions from several China Coast Guard vessels, specifically CCG 5303, 3302, 3104, as well as People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) vessels with bow numbers 500 and 571,” Malaya said.

He added that CCG 3302 fired a water cannon at the BRP Datu Pagbuaya, aiming directly at the vessel’s navigational antennas, around 6:30 a.m.

The PCG also reported the presence of a Chinese Navy ship during the incident.

“Following this hostile action, CCG 3302 intentionally sideswiped the BRP Datu Pagbuaya on its starboard side. Shortly thereafter, at 6:55 a.m., CCG 3302 launched a second water cannon attack on the same vessel,” Malaya said.

The NSC official noted that the PCG vessels, including the BRP Teresa Magbanua, also faced blocking, shadowing and dangerous maneuvers from PLAN vessel 500 and CCG 503.

He further reported that the BRP Cabra was likewise subjected to reckless maneuvers by CCG 3104 at a distance of only 300 yards.

Despite the latest acts of harassment from China, Malaya said the PCG and the BFAR “reaffirm their commitment to protecting the rights and safety of our fishermen within our maritime jurisdiction. We will continue to be vigilant in safeguarding our national interests in the West Philippine Sea.”

Crew's safety

Commodore Jay Tarriela, PCG spokesman for the WPS, condemned China's latest actions, stressing that the aggressive maneuvers endangered the safety of the Filipino crew.

"The People's Republic of China has no jurisdiction over Bajo de Masinloc, which is classified as a rock under the 2016 Arbitral Award and Article 121 of the UNCLOS. The Philippines has sovereignty over it, including its territorial sea," Tarriela said in a post on X, referring to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

He emphasized that waters beyond the 12-nautical-mile territorial sea of Bajo de Masinloc fall within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone, measured from Luzon's baseline.

"Our vessels are legitimately patrolling Philippine waters, while it is China that is encroaching upon them and militarizing the area by deploying PLA Navy vessels to shadow PCG operations," Tarriela said.

No reason to stop maritime operations

Following the CCG's latest harassment on Philippine vessels in the WPS, the BFAR yesterday said there is no reason for the agency to stop its maritime operations in Panatag.

In an interview with The STAR, BFAR spokesman Nasser Briguera also expressed deep concern after the CCG launched water cannon attacks and rammed a vessel of the BFAR while conducting maritime patrol in the vicinity of Bajo de Masinloc.

"We are deeply concerned about this latest happening, and despite this happening again as it occurred previously, the BFAR will continue to do its mandate and provide support to our fisherfolk despite the harassment of China," Briguera said.

He added that the BFAR and the PCG have issued a joint statement condemning the latest incident.

"We will not be cowed and will continue to perform the mandate of the agency within the exclusive economic zone of the Philippines," Briguera said.

At the same time, the BFAR official advised fishermen to continue their operations in Panatag Shoal.

"Just as what the National Security Council said, there is no reason for our fishermen to stop fishing, and there is also no reason for BFAR to stop its efforts to support our fishers," he said.

Briguera also belittled China's move after it submitted to the United Nations a statement on the baselines of its territorial sea, which included a chart showing the Scarborough Shoal as part of its territorial waters.

"There was already a ruling declaring that the rightful owner of Bajo de Masinloc, which is clearly stated under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea," Briguera noted. – Bella Cariaso

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2024/12/05/2405093/china-ship-blasts-philippines-vessel-water-cannon>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# DA to sell P40/kg rice at select markets, two train stations

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

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 09:03 AM December 04, 2024



Agriculture assistant secretaries Arnel de Mesa and Genevieve Guevarra show well-milled rice to be sold via Rice-for-All program starting tomorrow, Dec. 5. (Photo by Jordeene B. Lagare)

The Department of Agriculture (DA) will start selling well-milled rice through its Rice-for-All program at select markets and two MRT and LRT train stations in Metro Manila for P40 a kilo starting tomorrow, Dec. 5.

In a press conference on Wednesday, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said Kadiwa ng Pangulo kiosks offering well-milled rice will be open to the public every Tuesday to Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

These will be available in the following areas:

- Kamuning Market
- Malabon Central Market
- New Las Piñas City Public Market
- Pasay City Public Market
- Guadalupe Public Market
- MRT North Avenue station
- LRT Monumento station

De Mesa, also the DA's spokesperson, said Kadiwa ng Pangulo centers will also be selling well-milled rice beginning tomorrow.

The DA said the latest move is meant to address the discrepancy between elevated retail prices of the staple food and reduced tariffs.

<https://business.inquirer.net/494052/da-to-sell-p40-kg-rice-at-select-markets-two-train-stations>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# Creation of agri price index underway

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 02:07 PM December 04, 2024



Department of Agriculture (DA) logo with rice and some high-value crops. INQUIRER FILES

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has formed a technical working group to establish the Daily Price Index (DPI), aiming to prevent economic sabotage and monitor prices of agricultural products across all regions.

The DPI “will serve as a critical tool for determining the value of commodities under investigation for alleged smuggling and hoarding, which will determine if the illegal act warrants economic sabotage,” the DA said in Special Order No. 1804.

The DA is preparing the DPI in compliance with the newly signed Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act aimed at addressing acts of economic sabotage in the agriculture sector.

Republic Act No. 12002 mandates the DA’s Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service (AMAS) and Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) to establish the DPI within 90 days from the effectivity of this law.

“The AMAS and BAR, in coming up with the prices, shall ensure that the DPI exhibits transparency and accountability and is published on their official websites and social media platforms,” the law states.

The technical working group is responsible for ensuring that the DPI guidelines align with existing agricultural policies and economic strategies.

The panel should ensure that the DPI is used as an essential tool for monitoring the prices of agricultural commodities and preventing economic sabotage. Additionally, it will evaluate the proposed guidelines for the creation and maintenance of the DPI and recommend these to the agriculture secretary.

Agriculture Undersecretary Asis Perez will chair the panel while Agriculture Assistant Secretary Genevieve Guevarra will be vice chair.

The DA order created a sub-working group to facilitate the establishment of DPI, which will prepare the guidelines for making and maintaining the price index.

Experts and other relevant government agencies will be tapped to formulate the rules. They will find data sources and decide on the manner of collecting and validating data, as well as provide recommendations on data collection methods, reporting standards and dissemination of information.

It will be tasked with identifying the basket of commodities and product specifications and developing the statistical methods for computing and the mechanism for releasing the DPI.

The Anti-Agricultural Sabotage Act signed by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. in September considers smuggling and hoarding of agricultural products as economic sabotage when the value of goods exceeds P10 million.

Agricultural products covered by the law include rice, corn, beef and other ruminants, pork, poultry, garlic, onions, carrots, other vegetables, fruit, fish, salt and other aquatic products in their raw state.

The law classifies smuggling, hoarding and cartel operations involving agricultural products as economic sabotage.

Violators are levied with fine five times higher than the value of smuggled or hoarded agricultural products, in addition to life imprisonment.

<https://business.inquirer.net/494024/creation-of-agri-price-index-underway>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

# West Philippine Sea: PCG reports more harassment by Chinese vessels in Escoda

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 03:29 PM December 04, 2024



(Photo courtesy of PCG)

MANILA, Philippines — Aside from the harassment in Bajo de Masinloc, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) revealed that four of its vessels deployed near Escoda Shoal in the West Philippine Sea also encountered aggressive actions from several Chinese vessels on Wednesday morning.

Commodore Jay Tarriela, Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) spokesperson for the West Philippine Sea, said that four PCG and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) vessels responded to calls from Filipino fishermen reporting that small Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) boats were blocking their access to Escoda Shoal.

“So when the BFAR vessel was monitored by the Chinese Coast Guard vessels 21558 and 21559, they immediately conducted a blocking maneuver to prevent BRP Romapenet of the BFAR from



proceeding to the closest area where the Filipino fishermen are located,” Tarriela said in a press conference.

He added that CCG 21549 maneuvered close and side-sw

Moreover, the same CCG vessel intentionally rammed BRP Datu Romapenet, destroying some of the Philippine vessel’s structure.

“In total, we have documented the presence of [six] Chinese Coast Guard vessels in Escoda Shoal. China Coast Guard 5205, 5305, 5203, People’s Liberation Army Navy 167, and China Coast Guard 21559 and 21558,” he concluded.

Earlier, Tarriela released a statement revealing that five Chinese vessels also reportedly harassed Philippine vessels conducting a routine maritime patrol within Bajo de Masinloc.

In a post on X (formerly Twitter), Tarriela reiterated that China has “no jurisdiction over Bajo de Masinloc, classified as a rock under the 2016 Arbitral Award and Article 121 of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

“The Philippines has sovereignty over it, including its territorial sea. The waters beyond Bajo de Masinloc’s 12-nautical-mile territorial sea fall within the Philippine exclusive economic zone, measured from Luzon’s baseline,” he said also said on Wednesday.

“Consequently, the PCG and BFAR vessels are legitimately patrolling our waters, while it is China that is encroaching upon them and militarizing the area by deploying PLA Navy vessels to shadow PCG operations,” Tarriela asserted.

“The dangerous maneuvers and water cannon harassment by the CCG are not standard law enforcement actions; rather, should be interpreted as unlawful aggression by international law violators,” he added.

*For comprehensive coverage, in-depth analysis, visit our special page for [West Philippine Sea updates](#). Stay informed with articles, videos, and expert opinions.*

<https://www.inquirer.net/422581/fwd-pcg-on-another-harassment-by-chinese-vessels-in-escoda-shoal/>

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:**

## **California raw milk recall expands after tests find more bird flu virus**

Associated Press / 07:21 AM December 05, 2024



FILE PHOTO: Bottles of raw milk are displayed for sale at a store in Temecula, California, on Wednesday, May 8, 2024. (Associated Press Photo/JoNel Aleccia, file)

A California farm expanded a recall of raw milk sold in stores and halted production after state health and agriculture officials found bird flu virus in more milk samples.

Raw Farm, of Fresno, voluntarily recalled all whole milk and cream products from stores late Tuesday after tests found bird flu virus in “multiple” retail samples and dairy storage and bottling sites. The recall covers all Raw Farm milk and cream produced between Nov. 9 and Nov. 27.

The California Department of Food and Agriculture quarantined the farm and suspended distribution of raw milk, cream, kefir, butter and cheese products produced on or after Nov. 27.

“Californians are strongly encouraged not to consume any raw milk or cream products in their possession or still on store shelves,” officials said in a statement.

The move followed recalls of two lots of Raw Farm products after bird flu was first detected in retail milk on Nov. 21.

No known cases of bird flu virus have been confirmed in people who drank raw milk, health officials said. Pasteurized milk is heat-treated to kill the virus and remains safe to drink.

Pet owners also should avoid feeding Raw Farm products sold nationwide as “pet food topper” or “pet food kefir” to their animals, who can become ill, health officials said. Cats on farms with infected cows have developed brain damage and died after drinking contaminated raw milk.

[Bird flu virus](#), also known as Type A H5N1 avian influenza, was detected for the first time in U.S. dairy cows in March. The virus has been spreading rapidly, particularly in California, where nearly 500 of the more than 700 infected US herds have been detected.

The virus has infected 57 people in the US this year, including 31 in California, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mild illnesses have been seen in dairy and poultry workers who had close contact with infected animals. In two cases, an adult in Missouri and a child in California, no known source of the illnesses have been identified. No cases of bird flu spreading between people have been detected in the US.

Health officials have long warned against drinking raw milk because it can contain germs that cause illnesses that range from mild to life-threatening.

Raw Farm’s owner, Mark McAfee, has called for less raw milk regulation. In an Instagram post on Wednesday, farm officials said they were working to restore supply quickly.

“There are no illnesses associated with H5N1 in our products. But rather this is a political issue,” the post said. “There are no food safety issues with our products or consumer safety. We are working towards resolving this political issue while being cooperative with our government regulatory agencies.”

Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who has been tapped as the nation’s top health official, has vowed to allow wider distribution of raw milk. McAfee told The Associated Press that Kennedy is a customer of his products. Kennedy has criticized agriculture departments for cracking down on raw milk and promised that the Food and Drug Administration’s “ aggressive suppression ” of unpasteurized milk would end under President-elect Donald Trump.

<https://globalnation.inquirer.net/257477/california-raw-milk-recall-expands-after-tests-find-more-bird-flu-virus>

## BUSINESS WORLD:

# EU hoping to ‘match’ PHL ambitions for FTA by 2027

December 4, 2024 | 8:34 pm



REUTERS

A EUROPEAN UNION (EU) official called the Philippine timetable for concluding a free trade agreement (FTA) “ambitious” but added the EU side is hoping as well for talks to make progress according to the Philippine schedule.

Niclas Kvarnström, managing director for the Asia and the Pacific at the EU External Action Service (EEAS) said at a briefing in Makati City on Wednesday: “That’s great to hear that from the Philippine side, there’s an ambitious timetable,” referring to the schedule set by President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.

“We would also like to match that by being ambitious on our side... so we hope very much that timetable is realistic.”

The EU expects bilateral trade to increase with the FTA, Mr. Kvarnström said, cited the aftermath of such deals with Vietnam and Singapore.

“I would say the potential for both economies, and I think that it’s also true to say that we’re quite complementary in terms of economic exchanges and will significantly contribute to market access for both sides... and for the Philippines to move up the value chain,” he said.

Trade Undersecretary Allan B. Gepty has said the government’s internal target is to conclude trade negotiations by 2026, but the Marcos administration’s ultimate aim is to wrap up by 2027.

Mr. Gepty said the 2026 target is intended to ensure no gap in trade privileges should the Philippines lose EU concessions by graduating to upper middle-income status.

The Philippines participates in the EU’s GSP+, a special incentive arrangement for low and lower middle-income countries. It grants the country zero duties on 6,274 made products.

The agreement, which requires the Philippines to uphold commitments to 27 international conventions on human rights, labor, good governance and climate action, was extended until 2027 before it expired at the end of last year.

The EU is expected to negotiate for maximum access for almost all of its products, particularly meat, other agricultural products, electronics, and automotive products, while the Philippines will also be pushing for the maximum access for its agricultural exports, according to Mr. Gepty.

Mr. Kvarnström said he met with officials from the Finance department and other agencies on Nov. 25 to tackle potential areas of cooperation such as critical raw materials and green financing.

“Possible new investments in the green economy were mentioned as a priority area for prospective loan financing with EU grants, blended finance, and guarantees,” according to the Philippines and EU joint statement published by the EEAS.

In his visit to Manila in June, Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs Péter Szijjártó said his country, which assumed EU chairmanship in July, seeks to speed up negotiations for the FTA before the country’s GSP+ perks expire in 2027.

“Trade agreements are always tricky to negotiate between partners, but it does help to have political will on both sides, which I think there is (between both countries),” Mr. Kvarnström said.

“We hope that the direction here is that in a world where it’s a tougher space for free trade than it was before with higher geopolitical tensions, ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and European countries can find each other to be partners in a deeper way than before.” — John Victor D. Ordoñez

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/04/639419/eu-hoping-to-match-phl-ambitions-for-fta-by-2027/>

**BUSINESS WORLD:**

# P40 rice pushed out to more Metro Manila markets

December 4, 2024 | 8:33 pm



Rice is sold at a Kadiwa Store inside the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) in Malate, Manila, May 30, 2024. —

PHILIPPINE STAR/EDD GUMBAN

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it will distribute subsidized P40 rice to more Metro Manila markets starting Thursday, Dec. 5.

“There will be rice kiosks in selected markets in the (National Capital Region) including two train stations,” Assistant Secretary for Consumer and Legislative Affairs Genevieve E. Velicaria-Guevarra said at a briefing on Wednesday.

She added that the initial markets include Kamuning Market, Malabon Central Market, New Las Piñas City Public Market, Pasay City Public Market, and Guadalupe Public Market.

Kiosks will also be set up in the North Avenue and Monumento stations of the Metro Rail Transit and Light Rail Transit lines.

“These kiosks will offer Rice-for-All at an affordable price of P40 per kilo, available from Tuesdays to Saturdays, 8 to 5 p.m.,” Ms. Velicaria-Guevarra said.

She said that the kiosks will be affiliated with the KADIWA ng Pangulo program and supplied by the Food Terminal, Inc.

She said that the DA is also looking to put up rice kiosks at Balintawak Market, Cartimar Market, Pateros Grace Marketplace, Maypajo Public Market, and Paco Market.

“Rice for All” was first launched to sell cheap well-milled rice at KADIWA centers.

The government currently sells P29 rice to low-income individuals.

The DA is looking to expand its KADIWA network to 1,500 locations by 2028, it is expecting to open 179 KADIWA Centers by the end of the year.

Ms. Velicaria-Guevarra said that KADIWA centers will also sell well-milled rice at P40 per kilo starting Dec. 5.

According to DA price monitors, a kilogram of well-milled rice in Metro Manila markets sold for between P42 and P52 as of Dec. 3. — Adrian H. Halili

<https://www.bworldonline.com/economy/2024/12/04/639417/p40-rice-pushed-out-to-more-metro-manila-markets/>



**REMATE:**

# NTA mamamahagi ng P100M tobacco production grant sa mga magsasaka sa kalagitnaan ng Disyembre

December 4, 2024 18:24



MANILA, Philippines- Handa na ang National Tobacco Administration (NTA) na mamahagi ng P100 million crop production grant sa kwalipikadong tobacco farmers sa buong bansa.

Sa isang kalatas, sinabi ng NTA na ang 16,666 tobacco farmers ay tinukoy bilang recipients ng cash assistance na nagkakahalaga ng P6,000 kada isa, ipamamahagi bago o sa mismong araw ng Disyembre 15, 2024.

“The cash aid would cover tobacco farmer-recipients’ production for cropping year 2024-2025, which began in September 2024 and will conclude by June 2025,” ayon sa NTA.

Sinabi ng tobacco authority na ang recipients na tinukoy ng branch offices ng ahensya ay batay sa itinakda na alituntunin at aprubado ng NTA Governing Board.

Winika pa ng NTA na ang kabuuang 16,666 recipients ng cash assistance, 9,055 mula sa nasabing bilang ay magsasaka na nakalista sa ilalim ng Tobacco Contract Growing System (TCGS) program ng NTA at 7,611 ang non-TCGS farmers.

Sa ilalim ng TCGS program, ang farmer-recipients ay dapat na mayroong nakatanim na tobacco sa isang ektarya ng lupang sakahan.

Samantala, ang non-TCGS farmer-recipients ay dapat na mayroong tumubo o tanim na tobacco sa isang half-hectare farmland at sa ibaba nito, kapwa para sa cropping years 2023-2024 at 2024-2025. Sinabi ng NTA na ang mga benepisyaryo ng cash assistance ay kailangan na rehistradong tobacco farmers ng ahensya at personal na nagbubungkal sa sakahan ng tabako “capable of providing adequate labor to attend to all activities in quality tobacco production, able to provide basic farm tools and equipment, such as plow, harrow, sprayer, work animal, irrigation pump, and curing bar/air curing shed, and should have adequate sources of good quality irrigation water and desirable for tobacco production.”

“Before the grant’s actual distribution, the NTA branch offices will ensure that the recipients will meet all the requirements and surely plant tobacco this coming planting season,” ang sinabi pa rin ng NTA.

Ang bilang ng mga recipients ng cash aid kada NTA branch office ay:

- Abra – 992 tobacco farmers
- Batac (Ilocos Norte) – 2,778 magsasaka
- Cagayan – 700 farmers
- Candon (Ilocos Sur) – 2,573 magsasaka
- Isabela – 2,925

- La Union – 1,667
- Mindanao – 1,666
- Pangasinan – 1,765
- Vigan (Ilocos Sur) – 1,600

Sa kabilang dako, nagsimula naman ang NTA na mamigay ng P6,000 production assistance sa kwalipikadong tobacco farmers sa cropping year na 2023-2024.

Ang cash aid ay pinondohan sa pamamagitan ng General Appropriation Act (GAA).

Layon nito na dagdagan ang production support na pinalawig sa pamamagitan ng Buying Firms, Local Government Units (LGUs), at Farmer Cooperatives to the tobacco farmers para paghusayin ang kalidad ng tobacco production na sa kalaunan a makatutulong sa mga ito na itaas ang kanilang kita.

“The giving of production assistance for our tobacco farmers is realized under the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr., through Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel, Jr. and the NTA to enhance the production of quality tobacco considering that the tobacco industry remains one of the strongest pillars of the country’s economy contributing 1% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and 6% of the overall annual tax revenue collections,” ang litaniya ni Agriculture Undersecretary Deogracias Victor Savellano. Kris Jose

<https://remate.ph/nta-mamamahagi-ng-p100m-tobacco-production-grant-sa-mga-magsasaka-sa-kalagitnaan-ng-disyembre/>

**REMATE:**

# PH economy mapalalago ng ‘malunggay’ – solon

December 4, 2024 18:00



MANILA, Philippines- Binigyang-diin ni Senator Cynthia Villar nitong Miyerkules ang potensyal ng moringa, kilala bilang “malunggay,” sa pagpapasigla ng agricultural sector at pagpapahusay ng global standing ng Pilipinas sa health and wellness industry.

Inihayag ito ni Villar, pinuno ng Senate Committee on Agriculture, Food and Agrarian Reform, sa public hearing sa panukalang Senate Bill Nos. 1255 at 2713, o ang Moringa Bill, inihain nila ni Senator Imee Marcos.

“Moringa has long been a part of our culinary and cultural heritage, particularly as a vital food source for rural communities. However, its potential extends far beyond our borders as a superfood with high demand in the global health industry,” bahagi ng opening statement ni Villar.

Nilalayon ng Moringa Bill na gawin ang Pilipinas na leading exporter ng moringa products kung saan binabalangkas ang istrategiya para sa industry development kabilang ang research and development upang paghusayin ang production quality; suportahan ang mga mekanismo para sa local farmers at entrepreneurs; sustainable agricultural practices; at focused export promotion strategy sa international market.

Inilatag din ni Villar ang socio-economic benefits ng panukala, tulad ng “job creation, increased rural incomes, and overall economic growth,” maging papel nito sa pagsusulong ng health and well-being.

“Today’s discussion is crucial to ensuring that this bill meets the needs of all stakeholders. We are here to listen, collaborate, and work towards a future where moringa plays a significant role in our agricultural and economic landscape,” wika ng senador. RNT/SA

<https://remate.ph/ph-economy-mapalalago-ng-malunggay-solon/>

**REMATE:**

# PH gov't patuloy na maninindigan sa WPS

December 4, 2024 17:20



MANILA, Philippines- Patuloy na maninindigan at ipagtatangol ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) at National Maritime Council ang teritoryo ng Pilipinas sa West Philippine Sea.

Ito ay makaraang muling makaranas ng harassment ang barko ng Pilipinas at Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources sa Bajo de Masinloc kaninang umaga.

Ayon kina National Maritime Council Spokesman Alexander Lopez at Philippine Coast Guard National Task Force on West Philippine Sea Commodore Jay Tarriela, hindi magpapatnag ang bansa sa ganitong harassment ng China.

Hindi rin napapanahon na magpadala ng barko ng Philippine Navy sa West Philippine Sea gaya ng ginawa ng China.

Ang panibagong insidente ng harassment ng Chinese Coast Guard sa BRP Datu Pagbuaya ng BFAR at BRP Teresa Magbanua ng PCG ay nakunan ng video nitong Miyerkules umaga. **Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden**

<https://remate.ph/ph-govt-patuloy-na-maninindigan-sa-wps/>

**REMATE:**

# Pagbebenta ng P40/kilo Kadiwa rice sa public markets sa NCR kasado

December 4, 2024 16:15



MANILA, Philippines- Sisimulan na ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang Kadiwa ng Pangulo Rice-for-All program, kung saan nagbebenta ng bigas sa mas mababang presyo sa mga pangunahing pampublikong pamilihan sa National Capital Region (NCR).

“The DA, in partnership with the Food Terminal Inc., will deploy Kadiwa ng Pangulo kiosks in major public markets, including MRT and LRT stations. These kiosks will offer Rice-for-All at an affordable price of P40 per kilo, available from Tuesdays to Saturdays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.,” ang sinabi ni DA Assistant Secretary Genevieve Guevarra, pinuno ng Kadiwa program.

Layon ng Rice-for-All program na makapagbigay ng abot-kaya o affordable rice options para sa mga mamimili at makatulong na masugpo ang mataas na retail prices.

Paunang ibinenta ng programa ang bigas sa halagang P45 kada kilo at sa kalaunan ay binawasan sa P43 kada kilo.

Sinabi ng DA na mas mababawasan pa ang presyo kung saan simula araw ng Huwebes, Disyembre 5 ay papalo na lamang ito sa halagang P40 kada kilo.

“Currently, we are coordinating with the following major markets in NCR for the rollout: Kamuning Market, Malabon Central Market, New Las Piñas City Public Market, Pasay City Public Market, Balintawak Market, Cartimar Market, Pateros Grace Marketplace, Maypajo Public Market, Paco Market,” ayon kay Guevarra.

Sa kabilang dako, ipinag-utos naman ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. ang deployment ng Kadiwa ng Pangulo kiosks sa pangunahing public markets para mapwersa ang rice retailers at unscrupulous traders na ipinagdadamot sa mga mamimili ang benepisyo ng mas mababang presyo ng bigas.

“We plan to expand this program to other parts of the country where prices of rice remain high, a situation that borders on profiteering,” ang sinabi ni Tiu Laurel.

Matatandaang una nang inaprubahan ni Pangulong Marcos ang karagdagang budget na P5 bilyon para suportahan ang P29 at Rice-for-All programs.

“This initiative underscores the DA’s commitment to ensuring food security and stabilizing rice prices across Metro Manila,” ang sinabi ni Tiu Laurel. **Kris Jose**

<https://remate.ph/pagbebenta-ng-p40-kilo-kadiwa-rice-sa-public-markets-sa-ncr-kasado/>



**REMATE:**

# Barko ng PCG, BFAR muling nakaranas ng panghahas ng China

December 4, 2024 12:12



MANILA, Philippines – Muling nakaranas ng pangha-harass ang mga barko ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) mula sa mga barko ng China.

Ayon kay CG Commodore Jay Tarriela, ginamitan ng water cannon ng China Coast Guard (CCG) vessel 3302 ang BRP Datu Pagbuaya ng BFAR at PCG.

Ang insidente ay nangyari kaninang alas-6:30 ng umaga, Disyembre 4 sa bahagi ng 16 nautical miles timog ng Bajo De Masinloc kung saan pakay ng mga Tsino ang navigational antennas ng barko ng BFAR. Ayon pa sa PCG, sinadya rin umanong banggain ng CCG ang gilid ng BRP Pagbuaya bago muling binomba ng tubig.

Hinarang at binuntutan at ginawan ng delikadong mga pagmaniobra ang BRP Teresa Magbanua mula sa PLA Navy vessel 500 at CCG 503.

Habang ang BRP Cabra naman ay nakaranas rin ng dangerous maneuvers mula sa CCG 3104.

Sinabi ni Tarriela na ang insidente ay nangyari habang nagsasagawa ng routine patrol bilang suporta sa mga mangingisdang Pilipino ang PCG at BFAR sa bahagi ng Bajo De Masinloc.

Sa kabila nito,, tiniyak ni Tarriela na hindi titigil ang PCG at BFAR sa commitment nila na pangalagaan ang interes ng mga mangingisdang Pilipino. *Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden*

<https://remate.ph/barko-ng-pcg-bfar-muling-nakaranas-ng-panghahas-ng-china/>

**ABANTE:**

## **P40 per kilong bigas mabibili na sa Kadiwa**

Abante News

- December 4, 2024



Ibababa na ng Department of Agriculture (DA) sa P40 per kilo ang binibentang bigas sa mga Kadiwa stores sa ilalim ng programang Rice-for-All program at magpapakalat na ito ng mga kiosk ng Kadiwa sa matataong lugar sa Metro Manila para mas maraming makabili ng murang bigas, sabi ng kagawaran.

Nasa P45 per kilo ang unang naging bentahan ng bigas sa ilalim ng programang Rice-for-All na binaba kamakailan sa P43 per kilo.

Simula Huwebes, ibababa na ito ng DA sa P40 per kilo para makagaan sa bulsa ng mga namimili.

Sabi ni Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr., inaprubahan na ni Pangulong Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. ang dagdag na budget na P5 bilyon para sa Rice-for-All program.

Binanggit naman ni DA Assistant Secretary Genevieve Guevarra, nakipag-ugnayan na rin ang kagawaran sa Food Terminal Inc. (FTI) para makapagtayo pa ng mga kiosks ng Kadiwa sa matataong lugar tulad LRT/MRT stations at mga palengke. Si Guevarra ang namumuno sa Kadiwa program ng DA.

Kasalukuyang nakikipag-ugnayan na ang DA sa malalaking palengke sa Metro Manila para sa rollout nito. Sabi ni Guevarra, kausap na nila ang Kamuning Market, Malabon Central Market, New Las Pinas City Public Market, Pasay City Public Market, Cartimar Market, Pateros Grace Marketplace, Maypajo Public Market, at Paco Market. (Eileen Mencias)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/12/04/p40-per-kilong-bigas-mabibili-na-sa-kadiwa/>

**ABANTE:**

# China ‘binomba’, binangga barko ng ‘Pinas

Abante News

- December 4, 2024



Hinaras ng limang barko ng China ang mga barko ng Pilipinas habang nasa routine maritime patrol sa Scarborough Shoal o Bajo de Masinloc nitong Miyerkoles, ayon sa Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).

Ayon kay Commodore Jay Tarriela, PCG spokesperson for the West Philippine Sea (WPS), nagsagawa ng agresibong maniobra ang tatlong barko ng Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) at dalawang barko ng People’s Liberation Army Navy laban sa mga barko ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) at Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

Aniya, dakong alas-6:30 nang umaga nitong Miyerkoles, binomba ng tubig ng CCG ang isang barko ng BFAR at sinadyang patamaan ang navigational antenna ng barko. Nasa 16 nautical miles ng katimugang bahagi ng Bajo de Masinloc ang barko nang maganap ang panghaharas ng China.

“At around 6:30 am, CCG 3302 fired a water cannon at the BRP Datu Pagbuaya (MMOV 3003), aiming directly at the vessel’s navigational antennas while it was located 16 nautical miles south of Bajo de Masinloc,” ayon kay PCG spokesperson on WPS Jay Tarriela sa kanyang pinost sa X.

“Following this hostile action, CCG 3302 intentionally sideswiped the BRP Datu Pagbuaya on its starboard side. Shortly thereafter, at 6:55 am, CCG 3302 launched a second water cannon attack on the same vessel,” dagdag ng opisyal.

Bukod dito, sinabi ni Tarriela na na ang BRP Teresa Magbanua ng PCG ay nakaranas naman ng “blocking, shadowing and dangerous maneuvers from PLA Navy vessel 500 and CCG 503”.

Ang BRP Cabra naman ng PCG ay nakaranas naman ng “reckless maneuvers” ng barko ng CCG sa distansiyang 300 yard.

Sa kabila nito, tiniyak ni Tarriela na ang PCG at BFAR ay patuloy na ipaglalaman ang karapatan at kapakanan ng mga mangingisda sa loob ng WPS.

“We will continue to be vigilant in safeguarding our national interests in the West Philippine Sea,” diin ng opisyal.

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2024/12/04/china-binomba-binangga-barko-ng-pinas/>

**MANILA STANDARD:**

# Chinese ships ‘bully’ PCG, BFAR vessels anew



FLASHPOINT. A China Coast Guard vessel fires water cannons as it chases BRP Datu Pagbuaya which was conducting a maritime patrol near Scarborough Shoal (Bajo de Masinloc) that has been occupied by the Chinese maritime forces since 2012. X photo of Jay Tarriela

By [Rex Espiritu](#)

December 5, 2024, 12:40 am

The China Coast Guard (CCG) once again resorted to hostile maneuvers in trying to chase away Philippine vessels from Bajo de Masinloc (Scarborough Shoal) in the West Philippine Sea, dousing a Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) ship with water cannons before ramming it deliberately.

Commodore Jay Tarriela, the Philippine Coast Guard's (PCG) spokesperson on WPS issues, said the first of two water cannon attacks by the Chinese vessel, identified as CCG 3302, targeted the Philippine ship's navigational antennas as it sailed 16 nautical miles south of the contested shoal.

The BFAR and PCG were jointly patrolling the area on Wednesday morning when they encountered the CCG vessels, he said.

PCG vessels on the scene, including the BRP Teresa Magbanua, also faced blocking, shadowing, and dangerous maneuvers from PLA Navy vessel 500 and CCG 503, the official also disclosed.

Additionally, BRP Cabra was subjected to “reckless maneuvers” by another Chinese vessel, identified as CCG 3104, at a distance of 300 yards, Tarriela noted.

“At around 6:30 AM, CCG 3302 fired a water cannon at the BRP Datu Pagbuaya (MMOV 3003), aiming directly at the vessel’s navigational antennas while it was located 16 nautical miles south of Bajo de Masinloc,” the PCG and BFAR said in a joint statement.

“Following this hostile action, CCG 3302 intentionally sideswiped the BRP Datu Pagbuaya on its starboard side. Shortly thereafter, at 6:55 AM, CCG 3302 launched a second water cannon attack on the same vessel,” the two agencies further stated.

A video clip provided by the PCG showed at least one Chinese vessel using its water cannon on the BFAR vessel.

The PCG and BFAR stated that Bajo de Masinloc, also known as Panatag or Scarborough Shoal, is located well within the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone.

They reaffirmed their commitment to protecting the rights and safety of Filipino fishermen within the country’s maritime jurisdiction.

“We will continue to be vigilant in safeguarding our national interests in the WPS,” they assured.

However, the CCG presented a different narrative, saying it warned Manila to immediately halt its infringements, provocations and inflammatory actions “after a Philippine vessel intentionally rammed into a CCG ship in waters around China’s Huangyan Dao.”

“Otherwise, the Philippines will be held accountable for all consequences arising from this,” CCG spokesperson Liu Dejun said on the state-run Xinhua News Agency.

Meanwhile, U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines MaryKay Carlson reaffirmed her country’s support to the Philippines as she rejected Beijing’s latest provocation.

“The PRC’s [People’s Republic of China] unlawful use of water cannons and dangerous maneuvers disrupted a Philippine maritime operation on December 4, putting lives at risk. We condemn these actions and stand with our like-minded #FriendsPartnersAllies in support of a #FreeAndOpenIndoPacific,” she wrote on X.

Editor’s Note: This is an updated article. Originally posted with the headline “PCG, BFAR vessels harassed by Chinese ships during patrol.”

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314531868/chinese-ships-bully-pcg-bfar-vessels-anew.html>

**MANILA STANDARD:**

# **DA rolls out P40/kilo rice at public marts, MRT/LRT**

By Manila Standard

December 5, 2024, 12:20 am

The Department of Agriculture (DA) said yesterday it will roll out the Kadiwa ng Pangulo Rice-for-All program, where it sells rice at a lower rate, at major public markets and MRT and LRT stations in Metro Manila.

“In partnership with the Food Terminal Inc., these kiosks will offer Rice-for-All at an affordable price of P40 per kilo, available from Tuesdays to Saturdays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.,” said DA Assistant Secretary Genevieve Guevarra, head of the Kadiwa program. The program initially sold rice at P45 per kilo and has been reduced to P43 per kilo.

The DA said the price will be reduced further starting today to a P40 per kilo as part of efforts to shield consumers from inflationary pressures.

“Currently, we are coordinating with the following major markets in NCR for the rollout: Kamuning Market, Malabon Central Market, New Las Piñas City Public Market, Pasay City Public Market, Balintawak Market, Cartimar Market, Pateros Grace Marketplace, Maypajo Public Market, Paco Market,” Guevarra said.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. said the DA plans to expand the program to other parts of the country “where prices of rice remain high, a situation that borders on profiteering.”

He said the President had earlier approved an additional budget of P5 billion to support the P29 and Rice-for-All programs.

This initiative underscores the DA’s commitment to ensuring food security and stabilizing rice prices across Metro Manila, said Tiu Laurel.

<https://manilastandard.net/news/314532158/da-rolls-out-p40-kilo-rice-at-public-marts-mrt-lrt.html>



**MANILA STANDARD:**

# Lawmaker wants 35% rice tariff restored

By Manila Standard

December 5, 2024, 6:36 am

A farmers' group said the government seemed to have failed to protect local farmers and consumers due to the implementation of Executive Order 62, which lowered the tariff on imported rice to 15 percent.

AGAP party-list Rep. Nicanor Briones contends that the tariff reduction has not led to significant price decreases for consumers, as intended.

Instead, it has allegedly fueled rice smuggling and hoarding.

“Rice should be priced between P41 to P45 per kilo due to the lower tariff. However, some traders are exploiting the situation,” Briones said. The Department of Agriculture (DA) echoes this sentiment in a recent Congressional hearing, asserting that the primary beneficiaries of EO 62 are importers and traders, not consumers.

The government also suffered significant revenue losses, estimated at P12 billion, which could have been used to support farmers and fisherfolk, according to the Bureau of Customs during the same hearing last week. To address these issues, Briones proposes revoking the tariff reduction and returning it to the previous 35 percent rate.

He has also called on the DA to namedrop the top 10 rice importers in the country to investigate potential cartel activity, profiteering, hoarding, and smuggling. The recent seizure of 21 containers of smuggled frozen mackerel, worth P178.5 million, further highlights the need for stricter enforcement of agricultural laws. Briones, a principal author of the Anti-Agricultural Economic Sabotage Act, believes that the importer, Pacific Sealand Foods Corporation, may have violated this law.

The lawmaker and law enforcement agencies, including the NBI, PNP, Coast Guard, and DoF, are investigating the individuals involved in the mackerel smuggling incident.

Briones emphasizes the importance of imposing severe penalties, including non-bailable imprisonment and hefty fines, on those who engage in such activities.

<https://manilastandard.net/business/314532204/lawmaker-wants-35-rice-tariff-restored.html>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# DA hikes Rice Fund cash aid for farmers

By Janine Alexis Miguel

December 5, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) has increased to P7,000 from the previous P5,000 the amount of cash assistance to farmer-beneficiaries of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF).

The RCEF or Rice Fund was created under the Rice Tariffication Law (RTL), with an annual appropriation of P10 billion for rice farm machinery and equipment, rice seed development, and expanded rice assistance. The additional cash assistance will increase the funding to P17.6 billion, which will be sourced from excess annual tariff revenues from rice importation.

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) reported that rice import tariff revenues in 2023 amounted to P29.9 billion.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said changes in the distribution of cash assistance to farmers for fiscal years 2023-2024 are effective until Dec. 31, 2025.

In September, the Senate approved the bicameral conference committee report on the bill to amend Republic Act (RA) 11203 or the RTL. The amended bill proposed that the Rice Fund, which was supposed to end this year, be extended for another six years until 2031, and its fund increased to P30 billion annually from the current P10 billion.

Tiu Laurel previously said increasing cash assistance will enhance farmers' competitiveness. The Rice Fund will likewise upgrade post-harvest facilities, which could improve rice recovery rates by up to 15 percent per kilogram of unhusked rice.

Amending the RTL, he said, should allow for an annual review of fund allocation to maximize farm productivity. The RTL liberalized the rice sector by stripping the National Food Authority of its authority to engage in trading of the commodity. Its new mandate is to maintain buffer stocks for emergencies and natural disasters.

Senate Committee on Agriculture Chairman Cynthia Villar had expressed support to extend the RTL, saying she will push double the Rice Fund annual allocation to P20 billion.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/05/business/top-business/da-hikes-rice-fund-cash-aid-for-farmers/2016160>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# Kalinga eyes strick agri land conversion rules

By Conrad M. Cariño

December 5, 2024

KALINGA is eyeing more stringent policies on land conversion to address the decline of its agriculture industry.

"We have seen in our compendium and statistics that we have a decreasing production area due to premature conversion. The former agricultural production areas were converted into a settlement or commercial or housing project or resorts," said Flordeliza Moldero, provincial planning and development coordinator, during the 2023 PPA dissemination forum on Nov. 14.

Kalinga's agriculture, forestry and fishing sector shrank by 0.2 percent in 2023 after posting a decline of 1.8 percent in 2022, based on the results of the Provincial Products Account (PPA) reported by the Philippine Statistics Authority-Kalinga.

Land conversion is blamed for the contraction among other factors including the drought during the first semester of 2023, and Typhoon Egay and Super Typhoon Goring in the second semester.

Moldero expressed the provincial government's commitment to address the issue, saying more stringent policies on land conversion and reclassification are in the offing at the upcoming Provincial Development Council (PDC) meeting next week.

"One of the main agenda of the PDC meeting on the 19th is the presentation and adoption of the proposed policies regarding land conversion and reclassification. Because by all means, we need to respond to this or address this because adu ti implications na," she said.

Moldero pointed out that Kalinga is reputed as the rice granary of the Cordillera and must sustain agriculture as its biggest economic driver.

Compared to other provinces in the Cordillera, Kalinga's agriculture, forestry and fishing industry posted the lowest decline in growth rate, according to the PSA-Kalinga.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/05/business/agribusiness/kalinga-eyes-strick-agri-land-conversion-rules/2016112>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# Soil health project eyed in 4 provinces

By Philippine News Agency

December 5, 2024

LAOAG CITY — Ilocos Norte is partnering with Australia's Griffith University for a five-year \$3.5-million project to improve the productivity and sustainability of rice and garlic-based cropping systems in the Philippines through soil health management.

Arnold Pascua, senior agriculturist of the provincial government, told the Philippine News Agency on Monday that Ilocos Norte is one of the pilot provinces in the country where research trials will be conducted.

The others are Tarlac, Bataan and Agusan del Sur.

"The field trials will be more or less two to three years depending on the result of data gathering. Whatever the result for our agro ecosystem and our type of soil will be beneficial to our farmers. Other technologies to be generated from this research will be incorporated in the national soil health program of the national government," he said.

Pascua said the project is being implemented in collaboration with the Australian Center for International Agriculture Research, Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development, Griffith University and the concerned provincial agriculture offices.

Aside from the conduct of field trials in selected towns of Pasuquin and San Nicolas in Ilocos Norte, the project will also include capacity building, demonstration farms and farmer's survey.

Due to the series of typhoons that visited the Philippines recently, the scheduled launching of the project has been set to early January next year.

The project aims to develop a soil information system that will improve the productivity, sustainability and resilience of key cropping systems through improved soil health management.

It will also support farmers and various stakeholders in managing soil for sustainable agricultural production.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/05/business/agribusiness/soil-health-project-eyed-in-4-provinces/2016087>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# CE SAIN, Searca hold joint conference on agri-biodiversity

By Leander C. Domingo

December 5, 2024

MORE than 120 attendees took part in the joint international conference of the Center of Excellence on Sustainable Agricultural Intensification and Nutrition (CE SAIN) and the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (Searca) to discuss issues related to sustainable agri-biodiversity and food security.

According to Searca, the Joint International Conference 2024 is the Fourth International Conference on Sustainable Agricultural Intensification and Nutrition (#SAIN4) and the Third School-plus-Home Gardens cum Biodiversity Enhancement Enterprise (Shgbee3) Conference held on Nov. 19-22 in Siem Reap, Cambodia.

Anchored on the theme "Harnessing synergies of sustainable agriculture and biodiversity toward food and nutrition security and improved livelihoods," Searca said the conference focused on four thematic areas such as: sustainable agricultural intensification practices; biodiversity enhancement; promotion of food and nutrition security in schools and communities; and agripreneurship and social enterprise.



More than 120 attendees take part in the CE SAIN-Searca Joint International Conference 2024 held from Nov. 19 to 22, 2024, in Siem Reap, Cambodia. SEARCA PHOTO

It said the conference featured a dynamic blend of networking such as keynote speeches, plenary sessions, parallel sessions, oral and poster presentations, and mobile workshops at agricultural technology parks, farms and biodiversity conservation areas in Angkor Wat.

Educators, researchers and students from local schools; state universities and colleges, other higher education institutions and partners from the business and private sectors; and nongovernmental organizations in Southeast Asia also joined the event.

A total of 64 paper and poster presentations from the Philippines, Cambodia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the United States were featured during the conference.

Distinguished keynote speeches and conference messages were delivered by Rector Bunthan Ngo of the Royal University of Agriculture; Director Hok Lyda of CE SAIN Cambodia; Glenn Gregorio, Searca Center director; and Dexter Galban, Philippine Department of Education assistant secretary.

Gregorio said the plenary session discussions highlighted significant topics, including mainstreaming biodiversity in agriculture; promoting planet-friendly school meals; implementing school-based food and nutrition (SBFN) initiatives at national and regional levels; ensuring farmer inclusion in the SBFN programs; and encouraging youth engagement in agriculture.

Additionally, he said the conference showcased a panel discussion focused on fostering multi-stakeholder collaborations to strengthen school and community food and nutrition systems through school gardening initiatives.

Gregorio said a unique aspect of the conference was the mobile workshops that allowed participants to observe and experience the practical relevance of the topics discussed, and the research showcased in the paper and poster presentations.

Participants also visited the Hang Eco Farm, Somrong Primary School Home Grown School Feeding site, CE SAIN's Agricultural Technology Park (ATP), the mini-ATP at the Samdech Euv High School and the Angkor Wat Biodiversity Conservation Area.

The expertise of CE SAIN is centered on "Transforming the Agri-food System" through agricultural innovation research and demonstration, extension to farmers and stakeholders, learning opportunities to students, and networking to exchange information and research findings to leverage agricultural development.

Gregorio said this aligns with Shgbee's overall goal of improving the nutritional condition and dietary habits of school-aged children by diversifying and enabling year-round production of locally adapted vegetables through school and home gardening.

Now in its third year, Shgbee builds on the achievements of Searca's School-plus-Home Gardens Program or S+HGP, adding new dimensions of biodiversity enhancement and enterprise, he added.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/05/business/agribusiness/ce-sain-searca-hold-joint-conference-on-agri-biodiversity/2016109>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# NTA to distribute P100M assistance

By Philippine News Agency

December 5, 2024

THE National Tobacco Administration (NTA) has started the distribution of around P100 million worth of production assistance to help farmers boost local tobacco output, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said Wednesday.

"The giving of production assistance for our tobacco farmers is realized under the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. through Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. and the NTA to enhance the production of quality tobacco," DA Undersecretary Deogracias Victor Savellano said in a statement.

The assistance will cover at least 16,666 qualified tobacco farmers for the cropping year 2024 to 2025, which began in September and will last until June next year.

Each farmer will receive cash assistance worth P6,000 on or before Dec. 15, the DA official said.

Savellano underscored the need for production grants considering the industry's contribution to the country's economy.

"The tobacco industry remains one of the strongest pillars of the country's economy contributing 1 percent of the gross domestic product and 6 percent of the overall annual tax revenue collections," he said.

The highest numbers of farmer-beneficiaries are recorded in Isabela, with 2,925; followed by Batac, Ilocos Norte with 2,778; Candon, Ilocos Sur, 2,573; Pangasinan, 1,765; La Union, 1,667; Mindanao, 1,666; Vigan, Ilocos Sur, 1,600; Abra, 992; and Cagayan, 700.

Out of this figure, 9,055 farmers are listed in the NTA's Tobacco Contract Growing System program while the remaining 7,611 are nonmembers.

Among the requirements include registration under NTA with a personal tilling farm, sufficient labor capacity for all activities in quality tobacco production, provision for basic farm tools and equipment, as well as adequate irrigation water sources.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/05/business/agribusiness/nta-to-distribute-p100m-assistance/2016085>

**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# Del Monte taps TikTok to expand e-commerce

By The Manila Times

December 5, 2024

DEL Monte has leveraged the power of shoppertainment to amplify its digital presence through TikTok Shop, engaging more tens of thousands of viewers with fresh product offerings like dairy and snacks.

With a focus on appealing to a younger audience, Del Monte has introduced relatable short videos packed with useful information, elevating their online presence and making their products more accessible and attractive.

"As we churned out more live events with the support of TikTok Shop, it has been a wonderful journey for Del Monte," said Leandro Oviedo, Del Monte e-commerce director. "Also with TikTok Shop, we found newer ways to excite our consumers, especially with engaging and informative content that we publish.

Del Monte's strategic approach during the 11.11 Mega Campaign delivered impressive results, highlighting the powerful impact of TikTok Shop. Compared to the 10.10 campaign, the brand achieved a remarkable 148-percent increase in total gross merchandise value (GMV), with affiliate GMV rising by 76 percent. Affiliate live sessions experienced 212-percent growth, and affiliate video content grew by 44 percent. These achievements highlight how Del Monte effectively used TikTok Shop's tools to drive significant growth through digital engagement.

A key aspect of this approach has been Del Monte's innovative livestream sessions, which have transformed traditional retail experiences into real-time interactions with consumers, driving significant increases in engagement and sales.

Additionally, Del Monte's use of TikTok Shop's affiliate marketing has enhanced brand visibility, as collaborations with creators through competitions and creator asks have fostered meaningful connections and expanded their digital reach.

"Through impactful content and strategic collaborations with the right influencers, we've been able to engage with our audience in a way that feels both fun and personal," said Oviedo. "It's not just about promoting a product; it's about creating genuine connections that go beyond the screen. By engaging directly with consumers in real-time through live selling, we foster a deeper understanding of their needs and excitement, building trust and loyalty every step of the way."

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/05/business/agribusiness/del-monte-taps-tiktok-to-expand-e-commerce/2016084>



**THE MANILA TIMES:**

# DA to sell cheaper rice in some metro markets

By Giselle P. Jordan

December 5, 2024

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) will introduce the Kadiwa ng Pangulo's Rice-for-All program to several public markets in Metro Manila in a bid to provide lower-priced options to consumers.

Assistant Secretary Genevieve Guevarra, head of the Kadiwa program, said kiosks would also be set up in MRT and LRT stations.

The kiosks will be open from Tuesdays to Saturdays, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and will offer rice at P40 per kilo.

Rice sold under the program was initially priced at P45 per kilo and then recently lowered to P43. It will further be reduced to P40 per kilo beginning Thursday to protect consumers from inflationary pressures.

Guevarra said the DA was coordinating the rollout with major markets, including the Kamuning Market, Balintawak Market, Cartimar Market, Pateros Grace Marketplace, Maypajo Public Market, and the Paco Market.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel earlier said that the DA was planning to expand the program to other parts of the country where rice prices remain high despite lower import tariffs.

He noted that wholesale imported rice was priced at only P37 to P38 per kilo, but imported well-milled rice was being sold in local markets at nearly P48 per kilo.

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2024/12/05/news/national/da-to-sell-cheaper-rice-in-some-metro-markets/2015941>

## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# DA allots P5 billion to fund ‘Rice for All’ initiative

**Samuel P. Medenilla**  
**December 4, 2024**

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) has allocated around P5 billion to fund its “Rice for All [RFA]” initiative, which will allow consumers to buy P40 per kilo of well-milled rice.

DA Assistant Secretary Arnel V. De Mesa disclosed the amount will be used to pay for the expenses to be incurred by the government in implementing the program.

“There is an allocated amount for this. About P5 billion to be used for the roll-out of the project and sustain it,” De Mesa said in Filipino in a television interview with state-run PTV last Wednesday. BusinessMirror sought clarification from DA on the breakdown of the fund utilization, but it has yet to respond as of press time.

Launched last August, the RFA aims to provide Filipinos access to cheaper rice through the Kadiwa ng Pangulo retail sites compared to what is being sold in the market. Initially the RFA price was at P45 per kilo before it was reduced to its current price of P40 per kilo.

DA announced it will start implementing the RFA in major public markets in Metro Manila by Thursday. “We will launch it in Guadalupe Public Market, Kamuning, Malabon Central Market, New Las Piñas City Public Market and at the Pasay City Public Market,” De Mesa said.

Based on the latest price monitoring report of DA in major markers in the National Capital Region, the average weekly price of local well-milled rice is P48.24 per kilogram, while regular milled rice is at P43.55 per kilogram.

Meanwhile, the retail price for imported well-milled rice is P47.42 per kilogram, while for imported regular-milled it is at P45.17. While the DA will sell the RFA rice below the prevailing market value, De Mesa assured the government will not lose money from it.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/04/da-allots-p5-billion-to-fund-rice-for-all-initiative/>

## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **Tobacco planters to get P100-M cash assistance from government**

**Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz**  
**December 4, 2024**

The National Tobacco Administration (NTA) is gearing up to distribute a P100-million crop production grant from the national government to qualified tobacco farmers across the country for the 2024-2025 cropping year.

In a recent meeting chaired by Agriculture Undersecretary Deogracias Victor B. Savellano, alongside NTA Administrator Belinda S. Sanchez, the NTA Governing Board identified 16,666 tobacco farmers as beneficiaries. Each will receive P6,000 in cash assistance by December 15, 2024.

“The giving of production assistance for our tobacco farmers is realized under the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., through Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr., and the NTA to enhance the production of quality tobacco considering that the tobacco industry remains one of the strongest pillars of the country’s economy, contributing 1 percent of the GDP and 6 percent of the overall annual tax revenue collections,” said Savellano in a statement.

The recipients were identified by the NTA branch offices based on the guidelines set and approved by the NTA Governing Board.

Of the total recipients of the assistance, 9,055 are farmers listed under the NTA’s Tobacco Contract Growing System (TCGS) program, and 7,611 are non-TCGS farmers.

The TCGS farmer-recipients should have planted tobacco in one hectare of farmland and below, while the non-TCGS farmer-recipients must have grown tobacco in a half-hectare farmland and below, both for cropping years 2023-2024 and 2024-2025.

The beneficiaries must also be NTA-registered tobacco farmers personally tilling a tobacco farm, capable of providing adequate labor to attend to all activities in quality tobacco production, able to provide basic farm tools and equipment, such as plow, harrow, sprayer, work animal, irrigation pump, and curing bar/air curing shed, and should have adequate sources of good quality irrigation water and desirable for tobacco production.

Before the grant's actual distribution, the NTA branch offices will ensure that the recipients will meet all the requirements and surely plant tobacco this coming planting season.

The number of recipients of the cash aid per NTA branch office follows Abra with 992 tobacco farmers; Batac, Ilocos Norte, with 2,778 farmers; Cagayan, 700 farmers; Candon (Ilocos Sur), 2,573 farmers; Isabela, 2,925; La Union, 1,667; Mindanao, 1,666; Pangasinan, 1,765; and Vigan, Ilocos Sur, with 1,600.

The P6,000 production assistance, first distributed during the 2023–2024 cropping year, is funded by the General Appropriations Act. It supplements the support provided by buying firms, local government units, and farmer cooperatives, helping farmers improve the quality of their tobacco and, ultimately, their income.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/04/tobacco-planters-to-get-p100-m-cash-assistance-from-government/>

## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **‘With investment, small-scale farmers can restore lands’**

**BusinessMirror**  
**December 4, 2024**

The UN’s International Fund for Agricultural Development (Ifad) called for urgent investments to empower small-scale farmers to tackle land degradation and desertification, and contribute to safeguard the planet’s food security, climate and ecosystems

Ifad made the appeal during the 16th Conference of the Parties (COP16) of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) which kicked off in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia last December 2.

Land degradation is advancing at an astonishing rate across all regions, making it one of the world’s most pressing problems. But an abundance of healthy and fertile soil is the foundation of agriculture and a safe and prosperous future. Up to 40 percent of the world’s land is degraded today, affecting half of humanity. Land degradation and desertification affect in particular small-scale farmers from developing countries who produce one-third of the world’s food and are essential to the food security of their communities, their nations and the planet.

“The planet loses fertile land equivalent to the size of Uganda every single year,” said Alvaro Lario, the President of Ifad, ahead of the event. “We need to urgently invest to reverse this decline and restore millions of hectares to protect our climate, biodiversity, and food supplies.”

Estimates show that the benefits from investments in restorative and sustainable land management practices can be huge. Every \$1 invested in restoration generates up to \$30 in economic returns. Also, enhancing healthy soils can offset between 5 and 20 percent of global emissions while boosting food security.

Yet, global and domestic financing for rural areas and farming in developing countries falls short of answering their needs. For example, small-scale farmers receive less than 1 percent of global climate finance, representing about \$5 billion per year. According to Ifad, the financing gap is estimated at \$75 billion per year.

“We not only need more funding for food systems, but also smarter funding,” Lario said. “It is only by mobilizing private sector finance that we build more resilient and sustainable agrifood

systems. Nature is a common good, and investing in its long-term viability delivers returns, both economic and societal.”

Ifad noted the consequences of the lack of investment in food security, overcoming poverty and increasing stability. “Desertification and drought threaten the livelihoods of an estimated 1.5 billion people worldwide. Small-scale farmers’ food production is essential for economic stability in many developing countries where agriculture drives GDP.”

In addition to the human and economic costs, land degradation and climate change could force up to 700 million people to migrate by 2050. Every 5 percent loss of GDP is associated with a 12-percent increase in the likelihood of violent conflict.

Recognizing the interconnectedness of land degradation and climate change, and in response to the growing emergency to take climate action, Ifad is boosting its spending to support climate action, including nature-based solutions and restoration, from 25 percent of its Programme of Loans and Grants during the 2019-2021 period to 40 percent from 2022 to 2024.

Ifad’s next financing cycle, from 2025 to 2027, will increase the share even further to 45 percent. In 2024, Ifad invested more than \$750 million in projects supporting small-scale farmers to build their resilience to a changing climate, a major jump from the \$502.7-million spent during 2022-2023.

Over its last two project cycles, 60 percent of Ifad’s portfolio has implemented agroecological practices that boost productivity while preserving natural resources. Between 2015 and 2021, Ifad-supported projects have halted desertification and reclaimed over a million hectares of land by putting over \$1 billion into land restoration efforts, including agroecology.

Halting desertification and deteriorating soil quality is the focus of COP16 in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, from December 2 to 13, 2024. Ifad said it will be the largest UN land conference to date, where participants will work to mobilize funding and investments to restore degraded land and boost drought resilience for the benefit of people and planet.

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/04/with-investment-small-scale-farmers-can-restore-lands/>

## **BUSINESS MIRROR:**

# **Government to deploy Kadiwa kiosks in train stations**

**Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz**  
**December 4, 2024**



The Department of Agriculture (DA) is rolling out the Kadiwa ng Pangulo’s Rice-for-All program offering P40 per kilo across key public markets in the National Capital Region (NCR) to provide consumers with affordable rice.

Assistant Secretary Genevieve Guevarra, head of the Kadiwa program, said in a statement that the program seeks to help Filipinos cope with rising food prices.

“The DA, in partnership with the Food Terminal Inc., will deploy Kadiwa ng Pangulo kiosks in major public markets, including MRT and LRT stations. These kiosks will offer Rice-for-All at an affordable price of P40 per kilo, available from Tuesdays to Saturdays, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.”

Initially priced at P45 per kilo, the rice under the program was recently reduced to P43. Starting Thursday, the price will drop further to P40 per kilo, part of ongoing efforts to shield consumers from inflationary pressures.

“Currently, we are coordinating with the following major markets in NCR for the rollout: Kamuning Market, Malabon Central Market, New Las Piñas City Public Market, Pasay City Public Market, Balintawak Market, Cartimar Market, Pateros Grace Marketplace, Maypajo Public Market, Paco Market,” Guevarra said.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. has directed the deployment of Kadiwa ng Pangulo kiosks to force rice retailers and traders to lower prices.

“We plan to expand this program to other parts of the country where prices of rice remain high, a situation that borders on profiteering,” he said.

Laurel said President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. had earlier approved an additional budget of P5 billion to support the P29 and Rice-for-All programs.

“This initiative underscores the DA’s commitment to ensuring food security and stabilizing rice prices across Metro Manila.”

Based on the DA’s report as of November 30, prices of imported and local rice sold in Metro Manila markets ranged from P43.55 per kilo to P59.82 per kilo.

El Nino and the recent typhoons destroyed standing crops and widened the shortfall in rice supply. To plug the gap in domestic production, the Philippines increased its purchases of the staple.

Based on data from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI), that rice import arrivals in November hit an all-time high of 4.2 million metric tons (MMT). This was higher than the 3.606 MM of rice the Philippines bought in 2023.

Of the volume that arrived in the country, BPI data indicated that over 3.26 MMT came from Vietnam. Thailand was the second-largest supplier, accounting for 544,724.15 metric tons (MT).

The Philippines also imported from other countries, such as Pakistan (215,049.48 MT), Myanmar (184,815.75 MT), and India (22,260.82 MT).

Laurel had said that the country’s rice imports will reach 4.5 MMT by yearend.

Image credits: [www.da.gov.ph](http://www.da.gov.ph)

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/04/government-to-deploy-kadiwa-kiosks-in-train-stations/>



## BUSINESS MIRROR:

# Coffee traders cough up \$7B in margin calls in wild month

Bloomberg  
December 4, 2024



Workers weigh arabica coffee cherries on a farm in Tepecoyo, La Libertad department, El Salvador, on Tuesday, Nov. 26, 2024. On Monday, coffee futures in New York climbed to the highest since 1997 on worries about crops in top growers, threatening to further raise costs for roasters and consumers.

In Brazil's Minas Gerais—the biggest coffee-growing state in the world's No. 1 bean producer—farmers and exporters usually celebrate rising prices for the caffeinated commodity.

Not this year.

After several disappointing harvests, a sharp run-up in prices has left some big-name producers scrambling to square up their finances after finding themselves without sufficient cash to back their hedges on the exchange in New York.

Atlântica Exportação e Importação SA, for instance, which says it accounts for 8 percent of Brazil's arabica sales, last week asked a local court for more time to negotiate with creditors in order to avoid filing for bankruptcy. Sister company Cafebras Comércio de Cafés do Brasil SA is seeking the same 60-day grace period. Industry watchers say they won't be the last.

“Panic has hit the market with rumors that other trading companies could also face serious problems,” said Marcelo Moreira, a coffee specialist at Archer Consulting.

Futures prices for arabica beans—the variety favored for high-end brews—have been on a rampage, jumping around 70 percent between January and late November to the highest in more than four decades. Futures have since eased slightly but not enough to stem the pain. When prices rise, brokers require coffee producers and exporters to put up more cash in the form of margin deposits to cover possible losses. Some traders that sold futures are forced to buy them back to step away from the market, sending prices even higher in a vicious cycle. Moreira estimates as much as \$7 billion was put up in margin calls during the month of November.

Arabica prices were essentially flat on Tuesday after earlier rising as much as 1.6 percent in New York. At Montesanto Tavares Group Participações SA, which owns Atlântica and Cafebras, the cost to maintain hedges jumped to a staggering 158 percent of accounts receivable in November from 74 percent in May, according to a court filing seen by Bloomberg News. “The constant margin calls made the short-term cash structure unsustainable,” reads the document signed by lawyers of Atlântica and Cafebras.

The surging coffee prices are pushing the market toward a breaking point, echoing the recent troubles in other key commodities. In natural gas, prices spiraled out of control following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, forcing national governments to bail out some European utilities. Earlier this year, cocoa futures climbed to the highest in data going back to 1960 on a global supply shortage, triggering defaults and litigation among trading companies. Since many major traders deal in multiple commodities, coffee’s run-up only adds to their pain.

“High margin rates are a huge stress on the financial side, and for trade firms with contracts on both coffee and cocoa, it’s a double whammy,” said Judy Ganes, president at J. Ganes Consulting.

In addition to the financial stress, the coffee market is also reeling from high logistics costs and inefficiencies. Coffee sellers spent an extra 7 million reais (\$1.2 million) this year on things like additional storage space and other port fees, Brazilian exporters group CecaFé said. Shipping costs between coffee-producing countries in Asia and consumer markets in Europe are also rising amid the crisis in the Red Sea. Additionally, concerns are mounting that the next arabica coffee harvest will be smaller due to a severe drought.

“It’s the most aggressive movement I can remember in terms of domestic prices readjustments in a very short window,” broker Thiago Cazarini wrote in a report. Between higher borrowing costs and operational costs, it’s “all leading to stressful, not to say, business-killing atmosphere.”

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2024/12/04/coffee-traders-cough-up-7b-in-margin-calls-in-wild-month/>

**PILIPINO STAR NGAYON:**

## 5 Chinese vessels kinuyog barko ng BFAR, PCG sa Bajo de Masinloc

[Mer Layson](#), [Doris Franche-Borja](#)

December 5, 2024 | 12:00am



Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Spokesperson Jay Tarriela reiterated that China has no jurisdiction over Bajo de Masinloc, which is classified as a rock under the 2016 Arbitral Award and Article 121 of UNCLOS.

Photos courtesy of NTF-WPS via Jay Tarriela

**MANILA, Philippines** — Muling binomba ng water cannon ng mga barko ng China ang mga barko ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) at Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) sa West Philippine Sea (WPS).

Alas-6 ng umaga kahapon nang mangyari ang pangha-harass ng Chinese Coast Guard sa Bajo de Masinloc.

Napag-alaman na nagsasagawa lamang ng isang routine maritime patrol ang mga barko ng PCG at BFAR nang salubungin sila ng water cannon ng ilang CCG vessels 5303, 3302, 3104, at People's Liberation Army Navy vessels na may bow numbers 500 at 571.

Ayon kay PCG Spokesperson for the WPS Commodore Jay Tarriela, na may mga pagkakataong sinadyang banggain ang mga barko ng PCG at BFAR kung saan dalawang beses pang binomba pa ng tubig.

Sinabi ni Tarriela, ito ang unang pagkakataon na tumulong ang mga barko ng People's Liberation Army ng China sa pangha-harass sa mga barko ng Pilipinas. Muli namang tiniyak ng PCG na gagawin pa rin nila ang lahat upang maprotektahan ang mga Pilipinong mangingisda sa loob ng ating teritoryo.

Inaalam pa ang kabuuang pinsala na tinamo ng barko ng Pilipinas mula sa nasabing insidente.

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2024/12/05/2405126/5-chinese-vessels-kinuyog-barko-ng-bfar-pcg-sa-bajo-de-masinloc>