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MANILA BULLETIN:

Romualdez upbeat over benefits of Pinoy-made biofertilizer

BY ELLSON QUISMORIO

Mar 16, 2025 04:50 PM

AT A GLANCE

- House Speaker Martin Romualdez is confident that the Laguna-based Agri Specialist Inc.'s Bio N fertilizer plant--which will mass-produce locally developed biofertilizer--will be a game-changer in local food production.



House Speaker Martin Romualdez (Facebook)

House Speaker Martin Romualdez is confident that the Laguna-based Agri Specialist Inc.'s Bio N fertilizer plant--which will mass-produce locally developed biofertilizer--will be a game-changer in local food production. In his message at the inauguration of the fertilizer plant in Sta. Rosa, Laguna on Sunday morning, March 16, Romualdez spoke of the advantages of the biofertilizer developed by Filipino scientists at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

He says the biofertilizer reduces dependence on chemical fertilizers, improves soil health, and cuts farming costs.

“This means: Mas murang abono para sa ating mga magsasaka. Mas maraming ani, mas mataas ang kita. Mas masustansya at mas abot-kayang pagkain para sa bawat Pilipino,” said the leader of the 306-strong House of Representatives.

(This means cheaper fertilizers for our farmers. A bigger harvest means bigger profits. Also more nutritious and more affordable food for every Filipino.)

The plant, with its state-of-the-art bioreactors, automatic packaging systems, and microbiology research lab, will produce 7,000 metric tons of Bio N every year—enough to supply the needs of our rice and corn farmers nationwide.

“This plant represents more than just production capacity—it represents hope, opportunity, and independence,” Romualdez said.

He noted that for too long, Filipino farmers have been burdened by the rising costs of imported fertilizers, which left left the country's food security at the mercy of price fluctuations in the world market.

"Every sack of rice, every ear of corn, every vegetable on our tables comes from the sweat and sacrifice of our farmers. But if they are struggling with high costs and low yields, we all feel the impact," he said.

Romualdez highlighted the biofertilizer initiative as a product of the ingenuity and hard work of Filipinos. "One of the most important things about this initiative is that it is 100 percent proudly Filipino," he said.

He noted that the inauguration of the BIO N plant was the culmination of decades of research and innovation by our very own scientists at UPLB.

The Speaker said the project was proof that the private sector, the government, and local research institutions can work together to bring real change to the lives of ordinary Filipinos.

"To our farmers: This is for you. This is proof that we are committed to helping you thrive, not just survive," he said.

Romualdez said the inauguration of the new BIO N fertilizer plant is a win for every Filipino.

"This project is a bold step forward. But we cannot stop here. We must continue investing in innovation, research, and real solutions that uplift our farmers and strengthen our agriculture sector," he said.

He also exhorted policymakers and business leaders to invest more in agriculture saying that a strong agriculture sector means a strong economy, strong communities, and a stronger nation.

Likewise, he appealed to all Filipinos to support the local agriculture sector. "To every Filipino: Support local. When you choose Philippine-grown rice, corn, and produce, you help our farmers, you create jobs, and you strengthen our economy," he said.

<https://mb.com.ph/2025/3/16/romualdez-upbeat-over-benefits-of-pinoy-made-biofertilizer>

THE PHILIPPINE STAR:

Dire consequences



HIDDEN AGENDA - Mary Ann LL. Reyes - The Philippine Star

March 16, 2025 | 12:00am

There is now a proposal in Congress to ban raw mineral exports from the Philippines to pave the way for the development of local industries, but the local mining industry is against it.

Senate Bill 2826 or the Enhanced Fiscal Regime for Large-Scale Metallic Mining bill, which has been approved on third and final reading by the Senate on Feb. 3, proposes a ban on exports of locally extracted raw minerals similar to what Indonesia put in place in 2020 when it stopped the exportation of nickel ore and the bauxite in 2022.

The ban will take effect five years after its implementation.

According to Senate president Francis Escudero, what they are looking at is a shift in the country's policy from merely exporting raw minerals that will be utilized by other countries to produce higher value products to developing the Philippines' own processing capabilities, resulting in added value for minerals-related exports.

The five-year period, Escudero said, is meant to provide mining operators time to establish processing plants and downstream industries.

The minerals being considered for export ban include gold, copper, nickel and iron.

Escudero noted that the prohibition on exports of critical minerals is a global trend and that according to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, between 2009 and 2020, around 53 countries have instituted export prohibitions on critical minerals.

The Philippines is one of the world's biggest producers of nickel ore, supplying most of its output to China and Indonesia. Demand for critical minerals such as nickel and copper, Escudero said, has increased over the past decades as a result of the development of green initiatives such as the production of electric vehicles, since nickel and copper are key components in the production of lithium batteries of EVs. Nickel is also a key material in stainless steel.

Both the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) and the Philippine Nickel Industry Association has opposed, citing the insufficiency of the power grid and transportation network to handle such fast-paced industrial expansion. They said that a ban that would take effect five years after the law is implemented will likely have considerable unintended consequences and will lead to mine closures and disruption of existing long-term supply contracts.

COMP president and CEO Mike Toledo said that mining companies face key challenges, including high power costs, limited operations, and the need for significant investments in processing plants, which can cost up to \$1.6 billion.

The mining industry is proposing instead a grace period of 10 years and that the ban's implementation remain flexible to allow President Marcos to adjust the timeline based on economic conditions.

The House version of the bill does not contain a grace period and legislators are now seeking to harmonize the two chambers' versions.

Considering the huge investments needed to develop a local minerals processing industry and the infrastructure and policy limitations, the proposal if implemented immediately or even five years down the line will have disastrous consequences not only in terms of lost export opportunities but also huge employment losses.

What we should be doing instead is develop our local processing industry first, dedicate government resources to it, and lay down the supporting government policies. Imagine the dire consequences of losing the export market for these raw minerals while not having in place a thriving domestic processing industry.

Batangas' newest pride

Just recently, the President led the inauguration of a P278.3-million grain terminal in Batangas City, which will consolidate the supply of corn and in the process bring down the cost of producing poultry and livestock in the Southern Tagalog region.

The grain terminal is funded by a P100-million loan from the World Bank and counterpart funding from the Department of Agriculture and the Sororo Ibaba Development Cooperative (SIDC). The said project will enhance the existing feed mill of SIDC by integrating silo operations with a capacity of 12,000 metric tons.

Food grain terminals are used by large farm operators as well as farming cooperatives to store their produce after harvest and later redistribute it. They are important considering that a large percentage of food grains are lost due to poor storage conditions that subject such grains to moisture and humidity as well as pest infestation. Modern grain terminals help prevent such losses to a large extent.

According to the Department of Agriculture, nearly a third of the country's agricultural produce is wasted due to poor logistics system. It said that in post-harvest facilities alone, P93 billion is needed in the next three years to save P10.7 billion annually on wasted rice and corn alone.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said that this new grain terminal is set to become a central hub for yellow corn used in the production of animal feed and is poised to temper rising costs and ensure stable supply, benefitting hog and poultry farmers, corn producers and Filipino consumers

Also present during the inauguration were SIDC CEO and former House Rep. Rico Geron, Chronicles Ports, Inc. president Josef Cochien, Wong Chu King Holdings, Inc. managing director Caesar Angelo Wongchuking and WCKHI co-managing director and Nordic Atlantic Logistics Group president Christopher King Chua.

The project, Tiu emphasized, marks a significant step toward improving food security and agricultural sustainability in the country and demonstrates the importance of public-private partnerships in driving growth in the agricultural sector.

The grains terminal is located at the newly constructed port project in Barangay Simlong, Batangas City of Chronicles Ports, a subsidiary of WCKHI which is into the logistics, cold storage and warehousing business through Nordic Atlantic as well as petroleum services and poultry farming.

The port covers 914,959 square meters dedicated for break bulk cargo or cargo that is not containerized specifically grains, cement, among others.

Cochien said that they are also aiming to address the requirements of construction projects in Batangas and are likewise looking at putting up warehouses for dry storage.

For comments, email at maryannreyesphilstar@gmail.com

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/03/16/2428624/dire-consequences>

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER:

Robredo endorses De Lima's House bid during Naga City sortie

By: [Geromae Hope de la Fuente](#), [Grace Lucila](#), [Jetrude Nasayao](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)
Inquirer Southern Luzon / 12:49 PM March 16, 2025



WOMEN POWER. Former Senator and now first nominee of Mamamayang Liberal Party-list Leila De Lima looks on at former Vice President Leni Robredo, who is gunning for the mayoral post of Naga City in the May polls, as they were greeted by local vendors at the Naga City People's Mall Saturday, March 15. PHOTO BY GRACE LUCILA, INQUIRER INTERN

NAGA CITY — In a press conference at the Naga City People's Mall Saturday, March 15, former Vice President and now mayoral candidate of this city in the coming May polls Leni Robredo has endorsed Mamamayang Liberal (ML) Party-list and its first nominee former Senator Leila de Lima.

De Lima, staunch critic of former President Rodrigo Duterte and his bloody drug war, was in Albay and Camarines Sur since Thursday, March 13, to head ML's community engagements.

"I will vote for Mamamayang Liberal not because I am Liberal, [I will vote for them] because Leila De Lima is the First Nominee," Robredo said.

She also assured the public that ML was not made just for the sake of securing a spot in the government. ML party-list has been existent since 2012 but was only accredited by the Commissions on Elections (Comelec) last year.

"The Liberals are not just a political party. It's an organization of non-politicians, representatives of marginalized sector who bring their agenda to those communities," Robredo said.

City residents chanted “Leni!” and “Leila!” as they welcomed Robredo and De Lima, a native of Iriga City, into the city’s business district.

Victim of Duterte



CONNECTION. Former Senator and now first nominee of Mamamayang Liberal Party-list Leila De Lima connects with a local resident in an emotional exchange at the Naga City People’s Mall Saturday, March 15. PHOTO BY GRACE LUCILA, INQUIRER INTERN

During the a hour talk in Legazpi City last Thursday, the former senator also recounted her journey as a victim of the Duterte administration’s lies which put her in prison for 2,454 days.

“I was put under massive character assassination, vilification, vicious misogynistic attacks including slut-shaming,” she recalled. De Lima was jailed in 2017.

When asked about what she felt about Duterte being arrested by the International Criminal Court (ICC), de Lima said that she has always believed the time will come when the former president would have to face his crimes.

The former senator added that she had “mixed feelings of ecstasy and jubilation” that justice is finally being served to the victims.

“I’ve been hoping and praying for this to happen. In fact as early as July of last year, we already had information that Duterte’s warrant of arrest is coming,” de Lima said.

“I never doubted that I will be free, that I will be absolved of all cases against me, because truth is on my side. Now, I am truly free,” the former senator, who hails from Iriga City, Camarines Sur, said.

Bicol agri



SUPPORTER. Former Vice President and now mayoral candidate Leni Robredo bends down to speak to a resident of Naga City Saturday, March 15, when she and former Senator and now first nominee of Mamamayang Liberal Party-list Leila De Lima visited the public market. PHOTO BY GRACE LUCILA, INQUIRER INTERN

In Legazpi City Thursday, (ML) Partylist presented their goal to boost youth participation in Bicol's agriculture sector.

Partylist third representative and former House deputy speaker Erin Tañada explained that there is a need for the youth to be better encouraged to pursue careers related to agriculture, despite its reputation of being the "lowest form of employment."

In the Bicol region, it is estimated that there is a total of 384,801 farms, with more than 550,000 farmers recorded by the Department of Agriculture as part of the Registry System for Basic Sectors in Agriculture in 2023.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority 2022 Census of Agriculture and Fisheries, the youth only take up 8.9 percent of the total agricultural operators, with the older age groups (50 and above) accounting for nearly half, proving that senior citizens make up majority of the agriculture sector workforce.

"If we do not act on this problem, our agricultural lands will be targets of conversion. Not only will people and families lose their lands, but it will affect our food security," Tañada said.

<https://www.inquirer.net/432784/robredo-endorses-de-limas-house-bid-during-naga-city-sortie/>

ABANTE:

Presyo, suplay ng isda kakalma sa summer

Abante News

• March 15, 2025



Umaasa ang Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) na kakalma ang presyo at supply ng isda pagsapit ng summer ngayong taon.

“Inaasahan natin na kapag summer season, maganda ang huli ng ating mga mangingisda. Kapag maganda ang huli, inaasahan na mataas din ang supply sa mga palengke,” paliwanag ni BFAR spokesperson Nazario Briguera sa interview ng DZBB nitong Sabado.

mataas na supply, inaasahan din natin na stable ang presyo,” dagdag pa niya.

Aniya, inalis na ang fishing ban sa bansa kaya umaasa sila na dadami ang supply sa mga susunod na araw.

“Nabuksan na natin ang major fishing grounds kung saan ipinatupad ang closed fishing season. Bukas na ito sa fishing activities,” ani Briguera.

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2025/03/15/presyo-suplay-ng-isda-kakalma-sa-summer/>

ABANTE:

P45/kilo MSRP ng imported bigas lalarga na

Abante News

• March 16, 2025



Planong ibaba pa ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang maximum suggested retail price (MSRP) ng bigas sa katapusan ng buwan sa P45 per kilo kung mananatiling malakas ang palitan ng piso at patuloy na bumaba ang presyo ng bigas sa world market.

Ayon sa DA, bumaba na ang presyo ng bigas sa world market sa pinakamababa nito sa higit na dalawang taon. Sabi ng DA, bumagsak na ng mas mababa sa \$400 per ton ang ilang uri ng bigas at \$490 per ton na lamang ang landed cost ang magandang klaseng Vietnamese rice na 5% broken.

Ayon sa DA, mas mura na ito ng \$200 kada tonelada kumpara sa presyo nito noong Nobyembre 2024. Nagsimulang magpatupad ng MSRP sa bigas ang DA noong ika-22 ng Enero sa presyon P58 per kilo dahil bigo ang Executive Order No. 62 na maipababa ang presyo ng bigas. Binawasan ng EO 62 ang taripa sa bigas sa 15% mula 35% nu'ng Hulyo 2024 at sinabi ng mga economic manager na bababa ang presyo ng bigas ng P6-7 per kilo dahil dito. Kalahating taon na ang nakalipas, kakarampot lamang ang binaba ng presyo ng bigas hanggang nagpatupad na and DA ng MSRP sa imported rice.

Unang pinatupad ng DA ang MSRP noong ika-22 ng Enero sa presyong P58 per kilo. Walang pinarusahan ang DA sa nga nahuli nitong lumalabag sa MSRP at binigyan sa sila ng panahon para sumunod sa patakaran. (Eileen Mencias)

<https://www.abante.com.ph/2025/03/16/p45-kilo-msrp-ng-imported-bigas-lalarga-na/>

