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Phivolcs lowers Mayon status to alert Level I

MANILA – Mayon Volcano's alert status has been lowered from Level 2 (moderate level unrest) to Level 1 (low level unrest), the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said on Tuesday.

In its 5:30 p.m. bulletin, the Phivolcs said a steady decline in monitored parameters has



Mayon Volcano (File photo)

been observed. Since January, the volcano generated an
(Turn to p. 2)

PH orders Chinese vessels to leave Ayungin 'immediately'

MANILA – The Philippine government demanded that China remove “immediately” its vessels from the vicinity of Ayungin Shoal after protesting the dangerous maneuvers of the China Coast Guard (CCG) that caused minor damage and injuries to a Filipino resupply mission on Tuesday morning.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) summoned on Tuesday afternoon Chinese Deputy Chief of Mission Zhou Zhiyong to

raise its position.

During the meeting, the Philippines stressed, among others, that China's interference with the Philippines' routine and lawful activities in its own exclusive economic zone (EEZ) is “unacceptable.”

“China's actions in Ayungin Shoal infringes upon the Philippines' sovereign rights and jurisdiction. The Philippines demands that Chinese vessels leave the vicinity of Ayungin Shoal

immediately,” it said in a statement.

DFA Deputy Assistant Secretary Raphael Hermoso conveyed Manila's protest and reiterated that Ayungin Shoal is a low-tide elevation within the Philippines' EEZ and continental shelf.

“In accordance with the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and the final and binding 2016 Arbitral Award, it cannot be appropriated for sovereignty claims. Inter-
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ANGEROUS MANUEVER. A Philippine Coast Guard vessel collides with a China Coast Guard (foreground) ship due to the latter's “dangerous maneuvers and blocking” at Ayungin Shoal on Tuesday (March 5, 2024). The PCG ship was on its way to escort the resupply boats to BRP Siera Madre. (Screengrab from PCG video)

expecting that the price will drop even more this March, our palay harvest has started and it will reach its peak by March to April,” De Mesa added.

Likewise, he said that the lowering of the farmgate price will contribute to the decline of retail price.

De Mesa, meanwhile, said that El Nino's worst effect did not hit the productive stage of palay due to its timing.

“This is very small in terms of total rice area.



PEAK HARVEST. Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa says the peak harvest for rice from March to April will contribute to the expected decline of rice retail prices in the market during an interview at Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon on Tuesday (March 5, 2024). He added that the farmgate price of rice is also expected to drop. (Screengrab)

In terms of total rice minimal din about production, medyo
(Turn to p. 2)

Downward trend on rice prices expected amid peak harvest

MANILA – Consumers may expect a downward trend in the price of rice amid the peak-harvest season, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

The DA issued the statement on Tuesday following the reported rice inflation which hit 23.7 percent in February, contributing to the food inflation hike which reached 4.8 per-

cent.

During a Bagong Pilipinas Ngayon briefing, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said the prices of rice slightly dropped in the latter part of February.

“Noong huling bahagi ng February hanggang ngayon ay nasa PHP49 to PHP50 level na iyong prevailing prices (In the latter part of February until now,

the prevailing prices [of rice] are at PHP49 to PHP50),” he said.

In January, the average prevailing price of rice was around PHP52 to PHP53 for well-milled and regular-milled rice.

“Inaasahan natin na lalo pa itong bababa dahil ngayong March, nagsimula na iyong harvest natin ng palay at magpi-peak ito March-April (We are

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national law affirms that the Philippines exercises sovereign rights and jurisdiction over the feature," the DFA told Zhou.

While on its way to escort the resupply boats to BRP Sierra Madre (LS-57), the Philippine Coast Guard's BRP Sindangan (MRRV-4407) collided with CCG vessel 21555 due to the latter's "dangerous maneuvers and blocking," causing minor structural damage to the Filipino ship.

At around 8:15 a.m., another CCG vessel caused a minor collision with Unaizah May 4 (UM40), one of the two resupply boats, again due to the Chinese ship's "dangerous blocking maneuvers."

Four crew members of the Unaizah May 4 also sustained minor injuries after CCG vessels 21555 and 21551 pounded the boat with water cannons that shattered the Philippine vessel's windshield.

This prompted Unaizah May 4 to return to mainland Palawan, with BRP Sindangan as escort.

Gravely concerned

A number of foreign missions in the Philippines shared the country's concern over the incident, which was the latest since Manila and Beijing in January agreed "to avoid escalation of tensions."

Denmark Ambassador to the Philippines Franz-Michael Skjold Mellbin said he is "deeply concerned" at the news that four Filipino personnel were hurt by the Chinese Coast Guard during a water cannon attack.

"(It) underlines the urgent need for a peaceful resolution of the dispute based on international law," he said in a post on X.

"The dangerous maneuvers and blocking by Chinese Coast Guard and Maritime Militia targeting Philippine vessels engaged in resupply missions is deeply troubling," he added.

Australian Ambassador HK Yu, who was speaking from Melbourne while the high-level Australia-ASEAN Special Summit was ongoing, also rebuked the Chinese vessels' moves and called for restraint.

"Discussing peace and stability at the (ASEAN-Australia) Summit. Australia shares Philippines' concerns about dangerous actions by China's vessels at Second Thomas Shoal today. We call for restraint and respect for international law, particularly UNCLOS," she said.

United States Ambassador to the Philippines MaryKay Carlson, on the other hand, reiterated that Washington DC stands with Manila and "strongly condemned" the Chinese maneuvers.

Also expressing their concern were the European Union Delegation in Manila and the Embassies of Japan, The Netherlands, Germany, New Zealand, Finland, and the United Kingdom.

Following the incident, Stratbase ADR Institute president Dindo Manhit said the CCG's actions are "illustrative of China's blatant disregard of the

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0.11 percent ng total harvest na inaasahan natin. So hindi ganun kalaki iyong epekto (that's somehow minimal about 0.11 percent of the total harvest that we are expecting. So the effect is not that huge)," he said.

The El Niño phenomenon has so far caused PHP284.27 million worth of loss in rice production, affecting at least 5,011 hectares of rice farms, according to the DA-Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (DRRMO).

Modifying value chain

Undersecretary Asis Perez, meanwhile, said the DA is eyeing to modify the entire val-

ue chain.

He said this will cover soil and water management, improving logistics, and building post-harvest facilities.

"Kaya ito bibigyan natin ng pansin (We need to focus on this). We have to expand and make sure that our available resources, which is a lot, is properly managed," he said in a separate radio interview.

He said that out of 14 million hectares of available natural assets, there are 3.1 million hectares of estimated land area that can be irrigated.

Perez said they are looking to be more stringent in implementing a regulation,

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average of two to three earthquakes per day, most of which were related to rock fracturing processes.

A significant slowing down of lava growth was also noted -- an average of zero to one rockfall per day.

An average of 1,148 tons sulfur dioxide (S02) emissions per day was observed since January.

The highest S02 flux so far was 2,394 tons on Jan. 22, and the lowest was 420 tons on Tuesday.

Weak to moderate degassing plumes were seen this year, Philvolcs said.

However, it said

Philippines' national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

"These acts gravely endangered the lives of Filipinos at sea in the Philippines' own mar-

lowering the Mayon's alert status "should not be interpreted that unrest has completely ceased."

Entry into the six-kilometer permanent danger zone remains prohibited due to perennial hazards of rockfalls, avalanches, and sudden steam-driven or phreatic eruption at the summit area.

Aviation authorities are urged to advise pilots to avoid flying close to the volcano's summit as ash from any sudden phreatic eruption can be hazardous to aircraft. (PNA)

itime territory. China's unprovoked acts of aggression are unacceptable and irresponsible," he said in a statement. (PNA)

under the Price Act, to ensure stable prices of commodities in the market.

"In case na mayroong sinasabing (there will be what they call) abrupt increase in the price, which to our mind based on certain parameters is unnatural, then [the] government can intervene," he said.

Pork prices

As for pork prices, the DA said that although the country is recovering from the effects of the African swine fever (ASF), having vaccines would help address price challenges.

In Metro Manila, the retail price range of pork kasim (shoulder) is set at PHP290/kg to PHP370/kg,

and PHP340/kg to PHP420/kg for pork liempo (belly).

Earlier, consumers are raising complaints amid the surge in pork prices in Visayas and Mindanao, reaching as high as PHP400 per kilogram.

De Mesa expects a supply of vaccines against ASF by year-end or early part of 2025.

"Iyong United States of America at bansang Vietnam ay mag-sa-submit na ng application sa FDA para sa bakuna rito sa ASF (The US and Vietnam shall submit their applications to the Food and Drug Administration for the ASF vaccine)," De Mesa said. (PNA)

CAVITE NEWS PUBLISHING WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

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Biyaheng South Food Crawl: Exploring Cavite’s Culinary Delights

Recently, food enthusiasts and content creators embarked on a journey through the province of Cavite as part of the much-anticipated Biyaheng South Food Crawl. This immersive experience aimed to introduce external audiences to the rich tapestry of flavors that define Cavite’s culinary landscape, while also fostering partnerships between Metro Pacific Tollways Corporation (MPTC) and the Provincial Government of Cavite through the Office of the Provincial Tourism Officer to amplify the region’s gastronomic appeal.

Nestled in the southern part of Luzon, Cavite boasts a vibrant food culture deeply rooted in history and tradition. From hearty comfort foods to delicately crafted desserts, the province offers a diverse array of culinary delights waiting to be discovered. The Biyaheng South Food Crawl sought to showcase these treasures to a broader audience, inviting participants to indulge in a feast for the senses.

The food crawl was meticulously curated to highlight some of Cavite’s most renowned eateries and historical gems. Participants were treated to a guided tour of iconic food destinations, where they savored signature dishes and learned about the stories behind each culinary creation. Among them were Digman’s Halo-Halo in the City of Bacoor and the Hidden Tapsi in Kawit. It also included a tour of the Aguinaldo Shrine, also in Kawit, and Dambana ng Watawat in the City of Imus, which are among the iconic historical sites in the province.

In addition to promoting tourism, the Biyaheng South Food Crawl also serves as a platform for advocacy, highlighting the importance of supporting local businesses and artisans. By patronizing small-scale eateries and producers, participants not only enjoyed delicious food but also made a meaningful contribution to the local economy. Through this shared experience, they gained a deeper appreciation for the people and traditions that make Cavite’s culinary scene so vibrant and unique.

As the sun set on a day filled with delectable delights and newfound friendships, participants departed with memories to cherish and a newfound appreciation for the culinary wonders of Cavite. The Biyaheng South Food Crawl had not only succeeded in introducing external audiences to the region’s gastronomic treasures but also laid the foundation for future collaborations with the province of Cavite. --- OPIO

A Successful Medical and Dental Mission in GMA.

The Office of the Provincial Governor, in collaboration with the office of the Provincial Health Officer conducted a medical and dental mission in Barangay Poblacion V, GMA, recently benefitting a total of 488 individuals.

Joined by GEAMH doctors Keanu Augusto Manguiat and Merry Louise L. Bautista, alongside the medical staff, and the Carsigma District Hospital team composed of Ms. Nerissa V. Arandia and Ms. Lorna M. Castillo, the event aimed to address the healthcare needs of the community.

The medical services extended encompassed various aspects of healthcare. Notably, 420 individuals received thorough medical check-ups, while 50 individuals availed tooth extraction services. Additionally, 9 individuals underwent Electrocardiogram (ECG) examinations, and 7 individuals received X-ray diagnostics, reflecting the mission’s commitment to delivering holistic healthcare solutions. Maintenance medicines, supplements, multivitamins and mosquito repellent lotion were also distributed to the community.

In addition to medical and dental provisions, the program included free eye



Cavite lays out El Niño preparedness plans

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) – Cavite headed by Engr. Danilo Nobleza, in collaboration with the provincial government of Cavite, convened the inaugural El Niño Team Meeting recently at the Sangguniang Panlalawigan Session Hall, Legislative Building, Trece Martires City, to formulate a robust strategy in response to the ongoing El Niño phenomenon gripping the nation.

Recognizing the potential impact of El Niño on food security, water, energy, health, and public safety in general, the stakeholders from the different national agencies, provincial government departments, NGOs and the private sector gathered to formulate proactive measures aimed at mitigating its adverse effects on the province. The meeting, spearheaded by DILG-Cavite, marks a pivotal step towards safeguarding communities and ensuring resilience in the face of climatic challenges.

Mr. Alvin Mojica, Provincial Administrator Community Affairs, stressed the timeliness and the initiative and importance of collaboration in order to mitigate the impacts of El Niño.

PAGASA representative Mr. Henri Hermenegildo provided an outlook and discussion on the prevailing weather conditions and El Niño projections for consideration in the planning activity.

Key representatives from various sectors deliberated on a range of initiatives, including water conservation efforts, agricultural diversification, and community awareness campaigns. As the threat of El Niño looms, Cavite El Niño Team remains steadfast in the commitment to bolster preparedness and enhance the province’s capacity to withstand the impacts of El Niño. -- OPIO



check-ups, underscoring its dedication to addressing a spectrum of health concerns within the community.

The success of the mission can be attributed to the collaborative efforts of the local government, under the leadership of Punong Barangay Edwin Carl Ugay. Furthermore, the unwavering support of barangay staff, council members, and volunteers from the 402nd CDC RRIBM Tanza Cavite, led by Sgt. John Earl C. Villarica PA (Res), significantly contributed to the mission’s seamless execution. --- OPIO

DOH certifies over 100 community-based drug rehab programs in Calabarzon

CALAMBA CITY, Laguna (PIA) – The Department of Health Center for Health Development (DOH-CHD) IV-A announced that it has certified a total of 111 Community-Based Drug Rehabilitation Programs (CBDRP) from different local government units throughout the Calabarzon region.

Theresa Malubag, Regional Outcome Manager for the Substance Abuse Prevention Program of DOH IV-A said during a meeting of the Inter-Agency Committee on Anti-Illegal Drugs (ICAD) Advocacy Cluster that out of the total of 142 LGUs in the region, the province of Cavite with 23 CBDRPs has 100 percent certification rate after the rigorous validation process by the agency.

CBDRP is an integrated model for drug users with moderate risk for drug dependence and/or mild substance use disorder. Individuals who are under the program were provided with care from outreach and low-threshold services through coordination with health, social, and other non-specialist services needed to meet their needs.

Local governments were given the mandate to implement CBDRPs, depending on available resources and the number of clients they accept.

The health department, however, sets guidelines to which LGUs must adhere to have an effective CBDRP, such as adequate promotion of anti-drug use; and establishing prevention guidelines by having a health service provider

and screening tools for drug screening tests.

DOH also requires setting up treatment centers, forming a referral system between local governments and health service providers that will conduct drug dependence examinations, and having functional recovery clinics, psycho-social and spiritual services, and specialty service providers.

According to the latest DOH IV-A data dated Feb. 20, 2024, only 31 LGUs remain uncertified in the region. The majority are from the province of Quezon with 15 uncertified CDRPs, 10 from Batangas, and 3 in Laguna and Rizal, respectively. They target certifying all CDRPs by the end of March.

Malubag assured that they will continue to assist barangays in the region to attain a drug-cleared and drug-free declaration within their communities.

“Validation and certification are required for all applicants in the government’s drug clearing program. [Our] training on screening, providing interventions, and referral to treatment will continue for the validation of barangays to be declared drug-free,” she explained.

The DOH said that the drug-clearing program in the Calabarzon region will be further intensified through the promotion of a campaign for a drug-free workplace, disseminating information for advocacy and policies, providing technical assistance, and distributing drug test kits to local government units. (CCM,CH/PIA-4A)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
FOURTH JUDICIAL REGION
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
Branch 90
DASMARIÑAS CITY, CAVITE

File No. FC-DC-1272-24
EXTRA JUDICIAL FORECLOSURE
OF REAL ESTATE MORTGAGE
UNDER ACT 3135, AS AMENDED
BY ACT 4118

HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND
(Otherwise known as PAG-IBIG Fund),
Petitioner/Mortgagee,

-versus-

CELEDONIO B. REBATE, JR., MARRIED TO
JOSEFINA C. REBATE,
Respondent/Mortgagor,

x-----x

NOTICE OF SHERIFF’S SALE

Upon extra-judicial petition for sale under Act 3135, as amended by Act 4118 filed by the petitioner/mortgagee, **HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND (Otherwise known as PAG-IBIG Fund)**, a government financial institution duly organized and existing under and by virtue of Republic Act No. 9679, with postal address at The Petron Mega Plaza Building, No. 358 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue, Makati City against respondents/mortgagors, **CELEDONIO B. REBATE, JR., MARRIED TO JOSEFINA C. REBATE** with postal address at (1) Lot 5 Block 20B Terra Alta Homes, Barangay Paliparan, Dasmariñas, Cavite and for the satisfaction of the mortgaged debt which as of January 8, 2024 amounts to **NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND FIVE HUNDRED THIRTEEN PESOS AND 09/100 (Php900,513.09)**, exclusive of all legal fees and expenses incidental to this foreclosure and sale, the undersigned Sheriff will sell at public auction on **March 26, 2024** at 10:00 o’clock in the morning or soon thereafter in the Court Room of Branch 90, Regional Trial Court, Ground Floor, Dasmariñas Community Affairs (DASCA) Building, Congressional Road, Burol II, Dasmariñas City, Province of Cavite to the highest bidder and for **CASH** or **CERTIFIED CHECK**, in Philippine Currency, the following described real property together with all the buildings and other improvements existing thereon, to wit:

Transfer Certificate of Title No. 057-2015029909

IT IS HEREBY CERTIFIED that certain land situated in BARANGAY OF PALIPARAN, MUNICIPALITY OF DASMARIÑAS, PROVINCE OF CAVITE, ISLAND OF LUZON, bounded and described as follows:

A PARCEL OF LAND (LOT 5, BLOCK 20-B OF THE CONSOLIDATION AND SUBDIVISION PLAN PCS-04-023364, BEING A PORTION OF LOTS 9 TO 13 BLOCK 20, PSD-04-178383 L.R.C. RECORD NO. 8843), SITUATED IN THE BARANGAY OF PALIPARAN, MUNICIPALITY OF DASMARIÑAS, PROVINCE OF CAVITE, ISLAND OF LUZON, BOUNDED ON THE SE., ALONG LINES 1-2-3 BY ROAD LOT 15, PSD-04-178383 (6.50 M. WIDE); ON THE SW., ALONG LINE 3-4 BY LOT 4, BLOCK 20-B OF THE CONS.-SUBD. PLAN, ON THE NW., ALONG LINE 6-1 BY LOT 6, BLOCK 20-B OF THE CONS.-SUBD. PLAN. BEGINNING AT A PT. MARKED “1” ON PLAN, BEING N. 06 DEG. 17’E., 2240.84 M. FROM MON. NO. 79, IMUS ESTATE, THENCE S. 07 DEG. 09’W., 2.00 M. TO PT.3; THENCE N. 82 DEG. 51’W., 10.00 M. TO PT. 4; THENCE N. 07 DEG. 09’E., 2.00 M. TO PT. S; THENCE N. 07 DEG. 09’E., 1.50 M. TO PT 6; THENCE S. 82 DEG. 51’E., 10.00 M. TO THE PT OF BEGINNING, CONTAINING AN AREA OF THIRTY FIVE (35) SQUARE METERS, MORE OR LESS. ALL PTS. REFERRED TO ARE INDICATED ON THE PLAN AND ARE MARKED ON THE GROUND BY P.S. CYL. CONC. MONS. 15X40 CMS. BEARINGS TRUE; DATE OF ORIGINAL SURVEY, JULY 27, 1905-JUNE 11, 1908 AND THAT OF THE CONS.-SUBD. SURVEY, OCTOBER 15-30, 2006 AND WAS APPROVED ON JANUARY 10, 2007.

is registered in accordance with the provision of the Property Registration Decree in the name of

Owner: CELEDONIO B. REBATE, JR., MARRIED TO JOSEFINA C. REBATE OF LEGAL AGE, FILIPINO CITIZEN.

Address: BLK. 20B LOT 5 TERRA ALTA HOMES SUBD., PALIPARAN I, DASMARIÑAS, CAVITE

Prospective buyers and/or bidders are hereby enjoined to investigate for themselves the title of the said real property and the encumbrance thereon, if there be any.

All sealed bids must be submitted to the undersigned on the above-stated time and date.

In the event that the public auction should not take place on the said date and time, it shall be held on **April 11, 2024**, at the same time and place without further notice.

Dasmariñas City, Cavite, February 19, 2024.

ARLYN P. BARCELON
Sheriff IV

ATTY. MARCELA L. BAYBAY
Clerk of court VI & Ex-Officio Sheriff

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lowering the price of rice in the market.

“The focus really of government interventions should be on rice. The focus of the policies of the House of Representatives, of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the President’s administration in general should be to help lower the price of rice,” she said.

House Assistant Majority Leader Raul Angelo Bongalon of Ako Bicol Party-list said the government should now focus on two things: food stability and the availability of basic necessities for Filipino families.

“We rally behind the call of Speaker Martin Romualdez to keep on reviewing and prioritizing the legislation that will address inflation,” Bongalon said.

Speaker Martin Romualdez said Congress has allocated a substantial budget for cash subsidies or ayuda, particularly for vulnerable Filipinos under the 2024 General Appropriations Act.

“This decisive action demonstrates our commitment to protecting Filipinos from the adverse effects of global supply disruptions and ensuring that financial assistance is available to those who need it most,” Romualdez said.

He said the targeted subsidies are designed to safeguard vulnerable communities and support Filipino businesses, adding that these would be crucial for maintaining consumer confidence and

ensuring the continuity of economic activities.

Romualdez said the government has been “diligent” in implementing strategic measures to enhance agricultural productivity and stabilize market conditions in response to the global increase in food prices.

House Ways and Means committee chair Joey Salceda said the interventions of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Cabinet must be “laser-focused” on stabilizing rice prices.

“Vegetable prices are down. Corn prices are down. On the aggregate, utility bills are down versus last year. Even sugar prices are down on a year-on-year basis. In other words, if the government were to be obsessed with one thing, it must be rice. Rice is up 23.7 percent year-on-year, and month-on-month inflation was at an elevated 1.0 percent,” Salceda said.

He said the DA should ensure that all post-harvest support is ready for immediate use by April.

“Post-harvest losses amount to as much as 12-15 percent, and (DA) Secretary (Francisco) Tiu Laurel (Jr.) has been hyper-focused on dealing with this issue,” he said.

He said the government should also ensure that logistics issues at the port, in farm-to-market roads, and other potential supply bottlenecks are eased. (with reports from Filane Mikee Cervantes/Jose Cielito Reganit/PNA)

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HOME DEVELOPMENT MUTUAL FUND
(Otherwise known as PAG-IBIG Fund)
The Petron Mega Plaza Bldg.,
No. 358 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City

ATTY. ARISTOTLE A. ONG
C/o ATTY. MELANIO BADENAS JR.
GCCS & Associates corp.
RM 209 Megastate Bldg., No. 737 G. Araneta,
Tatalon, Quezon City

CELEDONIO B. REBATE, JR. MARRIED TO JOSEFINA C. REBATE
1) Lot 5 Block 20-B Terra Alta Homes, Barangay Paliparan, Dasmariñas, Cavite

Notice posted at:
1. The Bulletin Board of Regional Trial Court, Dasmariñas City, Cavite
2. The Bulletin Board of Dasmariñas City Hall
3. The Bulletin Board of Dasmariñas City Post Office
4. The Bulletin Board of Dasmariñas City Public Market

Inflation settles at 3.4% in February

MANILA – The government is intensifying its efforts to mitigate the effects of the El Niño phenomenon and help keep the inflation rate within target.

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) made the statement on Tuesday after the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that headline inflation accelerated to 3.4 percent in February this year.

The headline inflation during the month was still within the government's 2 to 4 percent target but higher than the 2.8 percent recorded in January this year.

In a briefing, National Statistician Dennis Mapa said the headline inflation last month however was lower than the 8.6 percent recorded in February last year.

Core inflation which excludes volatile oil and food items slightly went down to 3.6 percent in February from 3.8 percent in January.

Mapa said the uptrend in the overall headline inflation in February 2024 was primarily influenced by the higher year-on-year increase in the heavily weighted food and non-alcoholic beverages at 4.6 percent during the month from 3.5 percent in the previous month.

Food inflation rose to 4.8 percent in February from 3.3 percent in January.

Rice inflation in particular went up to 23.7 percent which Mapa attributed to tight supply and high world rice prices.

The annual increase of transport at 1.2 percent from an annual decline of 0.3 percent in January 2024 also contributed to the uptrend in overall inflation.

Mapa said housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels also contributed to the uptrend as it recorded a faster annual increase of 0.9 percent from 0.7 percent in Jan-

uary 2024.

Medium-term inflation path

In a statement, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said the latest inflation data is within its forecast range of 2.8 to 3.6 percent.

The central bank said that while the BSP expects inflation to remain within target in the first quarter of the year, inflation could temporarily accelerate above the target range in the second quarter due to the adverse impact of El Niño weather conditions on agricultural production and positive base effects.

"The risks to the inflation outlook have receded but remain tilted toward the upside. The upside risks to the inflation forecasts are linked mainly to higher transport charges, increased electricity rates, higher

oil, and domestic food prices, and the additional impact on food prices of a strong El Niño episode," the BSP said.

The BSP said the Monetary Board deems it appropriate to keep the BSP's monetary policy settings unchanged in the near term amid the improvement in inflation conditions.

"The BSP also continues to support the National Government's non-monetary measures to address supply-side pressures on prices and sustain the disinflation process," the central bank said.

Government measures

NEDA Secretary Arsenio Balisacan said the government would continue monitoring food supply and prices and implement necessary policies and strategies to ensure affordable and adequate food for Filipino families, especially those from the most vulnerable sectors.

"As we navigate the economic landscape, it is imperative that we remain vigilant and proactive in our approach to managing inflationary pressures. While we have

seen some relief from certain inflation risks, we must not become complacent. The potential impact of a strong El Niño weather pattern on food prices is a significant concern for our community," he said in a separate statement.

"Rising transportation costs, electricity rates, and volatile oil markets are putting pressure on household finances. Our team is actively formulating robust strategies with the concerned agencies in response to these challenges. We must be agile, adaptive, and forward-thinking," Balisacan added.

International rice prices have started to ease, and local supply is expected to increase with the dry season harvest beginning this month until April, he said.

He added that the Department of Agriculture is closely collaborating with the International Rice Research Institute to increase the country's rice production.

Meanwhile, the next phase of the vaccine test for African Swine Fever is awaiting Food and Drug Administration approval, he said.

Once the ASF vaccine is proven effective, the government will roll out a vaccination campaign to help ensure adequate pork supply in the country, he added.

Top priority

For his part, Department of Finance (DOF) Secretary Ralph Recto on Tuesday assured the public that the government has a comprehensive plan in place to keep the prices of goods and services stable and affordable.

In a statement, Recto said the Reduce Emerging Inflation Now (REIN) plan will help keep the inflation rate within manageable levels, especially with the looming threat of El Niño.

"As I have said before, reducing inflation and protecting the purchas-



Barangay Malaking Tatyao in Silang, Cavite, witnessed a display of compassion and community support as the medical and dental mission team of the Office of the Provincial Governor in partnership with the Office of the Provincial Health Officer conducted a health mission recently benefiting more than 200 individuals.

The health event addressed immediate health concerns of the community. Volunteers and medical practitioners offered free health checkups, tooth extractions, eye check-ups as well as prescription medicines.

The highlight of the day was undoubtedly the collective spirit of generosity and compassion that permeated every interaction. Volunteers worked tirelessly, fueled by a shared desire to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Whether administering medication, performing dental procedures, or simply lending a listening ear, each act of kindness contributed to the overarching goal of promoting health and wellness.

ing power of Filipinos is a top priority of this administration. The government and the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas [BSP] are working in sync to ensure that both non-monetary and monetary measures prioritize growth and price stability," he said.

Recto said he is closely monitoring the implementation of strategies under the REIN plan.

Among these is prioritizing the expeditious execution of the 2024 national budget to enable the timely implementation of measures aimed at enhancing agricultural production.

The Department of Budget and Management has already approved the release of PHP455.59 million for the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund for the first quarter of 2024 to fund programs focusing on farm productivity and food security.

The government will also continue the distribution of fertilizer discount vouchers to sustain crop production amid El Niño.

Exploring more rice trade agreements is also part of the government's plan to ensure a stable supply of rice. Apart from ongoing rice trade deals with India and Vietnam, the government is in talks with Cambodia.

Recto said the government is also accelerating the implementation of the El Niño Mitigation and Adaptation Plan and responses to address the impact of typhoons.

It also ensures timely and sufficient imports of key commodities based on more frequent analysis of demand and supply conditions while combating anti-competitive practices.

The government will soon release the guidelines for the implementation of the toll rate hike exemption for trucks catering to agricultural goods.

Government interventions

Members of the House of Representatives said the government has put in place many intervention programs to cushion the effects of the rise in inflation last February.

"I have a list of programs being implemented by the government every week to soften this inflation, para hindi mahirapan ang mga kababayanan natin (to ease the woes of our countrymen)," Tulfo said in the regular press briefing of the House of Representatives.

He said these include the Card and Rice Distribution (CARD) Program, Ayuda para sa Kapos ang Kita Program (AKAP), the Sustainable Livelihood Program (SLP), and the Tulong Panghanap-buhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD).

Rizal Rep. Fidel Nograles, the chair of the House Committee on Labor and Employment, said these government aid programs work as "wage subsidies" in the absence of a legislated wage hike for now.

House Assistant Majority Leader Mikaela Angela Suansing of Nueva Ecija said that with the rise in inflation in February, the government should be focusing on

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1st phase of LRT-1 Cavite Extension 97% complete

MANILA – The first phase of the Light Rail Transit Line 1 (LRT-1) Cavite Extension is now 97 percent complete and is on track to begin operations in the fourth quarter of this year.

In a statement on Wednesday, president and CEO of the Light Rail Manila Corp. (LRMC), the private operator of the LRT-1, Juan Alfonso said the completion rate was reached in January, with both civil and system works “progressing rapidly.”

“We are optimistic about the progress achieved in the LRT-1 Cavite Extension Phase 1 project. This significant milestone is a testament to the perseverance and dedication of our team and our contractors,” Alfonso said.

To date, he said, the five new stations are also nearing completion – the Redemptorist Station at 93.3 percent, MIA Station at 93.5 percent, Asia World Station at 83 percent, Ninoy Aquino Station at 88 percent, and Dr. Santos Station at 94.1 percent.

“Notably, (the) Dr. Santos Station has completed staircase and louver installation. (The) MIA Sta-



NEARING COMPLETION. *The under-construction Dr. Santos Station of the Light Rail Transit Line 1 (LRT-1) Cavite Extension in Parañaque City in this undated photo. The Light Rail Manila Corp. said Wednesday (March 6, 2024) that the first phase of the Cavite Extension project is 97 percent complete and will be operational by the fourth quarter of 2024. (Photo courtesy of LRMC)*

tion has finalized its ceiling, and the station is currently undertaking secondary steelwork. Additionally, drainage works have commenced at (the) Redemptorist Station,” he said.

In addition, the installation of telecommunications equipment at the Dr. Santos and Redemptorist stations has been completed, and similar work has begun at the MIA and Asia World stations.

“Beyond construction progress, LRMC is actively conducting test runs of various generations of LRT-1 trains, ensuring their compatibility and readiness for operations,” Alfonso said.

Once completed, he

said the LRT-1 Cavite Extension is “poised to significantly contribute to the nation’s economic growth and development by fostering improved connectivity between individuals and communities.”

The Cavite Extension project will extend the existing LRT-1 by 6.2 km., with the first phase connecting the Baclaran Station in Pasay City to the Dr. Santos Station in Parañaque City.

It is capable of serving 600,000 passengers daily. (PNA)

**SAY NO
TO
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CCC, UP boost ties to advance climate governance

MANILA – The Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the University of the Philippines National College of Public Administration and Governance (UP-NCPAG) reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen collaborative efforts, aimed at advancing climate governance and good governance initiatives in the Philippines.

CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert Borje and UP-NCPAG Dean Dr. Kristoffer Berse already discussed possible areas of collaboration, including improving access to climate financing for vulnerable local government units, enhancing the capacities of diverse stakeholders in climate change programming, and bolstering institutional capabilities for climate change initiatives, according to a news release on Saturday.

Recognizing UP’s reputation as a premier academic institution, Borje said the CCC is eager to enlist the expertise of professionals “to refine our capabilities and elevate our proficiency.”

“Our steadfast commitment to advancing climate governance aligns with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.’s pledge to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities, facilitate access to climate financing, and enhance the pro-



CLIMATE GOVERNANCE. *The Climate Change Commission and University of the Philippines National College of Public Administration and Governance discuss strategies to strengthen the CCC’s role in climate governance in this undated photo. The CCC and UP signed a memorandum of agreement in 2013 to strengthen technical collaboration in capacity development and related climate services and actions. (Photo from CCC)*

gramming capacities of diverse stakeholders. specific challenges persist in climate governance, and our success hinges on forging robust partnerships like this with UP-NCPAG,” he added.

Berse emphasized the need for CCC to maintain its leadership in climate governance, especially in collaboration with local government units.

He highlighted the wealth of experiences and lessons learned in the Philippines.

“We possess models and benchmarks from which other vulnerable nations can draw insights. With our expertise, the imperative is to create a platform that converges these resources, and that is where UP-NCPAG can significantly support the Commission,” he said.

The CCC, as the government’s lead policy-making body on climate change, is

tasked to coordinate, monitor, and evaluate programs and ensure integration into national, local, and sectoral development plans.

UP-NCPAG, one of the country’s leading academic institutions in public management and policy, is dedicated to providing instruction, research, and extension services.

This partnership builds on the Memorandum of Agreement signed by CCC and UP in 2013, which aims to strengthen technical collaboration in capacity development and related climate services and actions to national government agencies, local government units, local state colleges and universities and other sectors in the academe, private sector, development partners, civil society organizations, and vulnerable sectors of society. (PR/PNA)

I have seen something further under the sun, that the swift do not always win the race, nor do the mighty win the battle, nor do the wise always have the food, nor do the intelligent always have the riches, nor do those with knowledge always have success, because time and unexpected events overtake them all.

Ecclesiastes 9: 11