

# Palay, corn Q3 output estimates downgraded

THE Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said it scaled back its production forecasts for palay (unmilled rice) and corn in the third quarter after evaluating

new data on the standing crop. In July, the PSA had estimated palay production of around 4 million metric tons (MMT) but now expects the third-quarter

total to come in at 3.93 MMT. If realized, the new estimate would represent a 19% year-on-year increase and a 9.86% quarter-on-quarter decline.

Corn production was initially estimated in July at 2.53 MMT but is now expected to come in at 2.41 MMT. — **Andre Christopher H. Alampay**



## Protesting farmers say corruption has weakened gov’t ability to aid farmers

FARMERS protesting outside the departments of Agriculture (DA) and Agrarian Reform (DAR) said the government has lost the capacity to aid farmers as a result of the funding lost to waste and corruption. Amihan Secretary-General Cathy Estavillo, an alliance of peasant women, said in a speech to the crowd gathered outside the DA:

“*Alam niya* (President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.) *’yung nangyayaring katiwalian dahil siya ang pumipirma sa* National Expenditure Program. (The President knows about the corruption because it is his signature on the NEP). *“Ang pinakabiktimang dito ang walang iba kundi ang mahihirap na sektor ng ating lipunan* (The

foremost victims are the poorest segments of society),” she added. Farmers from Laguna, Bulacan, Tarlac, Rizal, Cavite, Ilocos, and Negros participated in the protests, calling attention to the low prices received by farmers for their rice harvest. They called for the repeal of the Rice Tariffication Law, which

liberalized rice imports and give traders more leverage to negotiate lower prices with farmers. Protest organizers said they are organizing encampments outside the DAR until Oct. 21, the 53<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of President Ferdinand E. Marcos, Sr.’s land reform law. — **Andre Christopher H. Alampay**

## MSMEs ‘severely disadvantaged’ by lack of access to tech — PCCI

SMALL businesses are facing formidable obstacles to growth, especially the lack of access to technology, according to Enunina V. Mangio, president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI). “The digital divide is not a minor inconvenience — it is a fundamental barrier to growth,” she said, noting that commerce is now being done digitally, with customers researching products online before purchasing, and marketing reaching audiences through digital channels. “For (micro, small and medium enterprises) that lack access to these capabilities, the disadvantage is severe and cumulative,” she said. “They cannot reach customers beyond their immediate vicinity, cannot respond to market changes with necessary speed, and cannot access the efficiency gains that technology provides.” Ms. Mangio was speaking at an event organized by DITO Telecommunity Corp., which was launching DITO Bizbayan, a platform intended to boost MSME connectivity.

“Many lack the technological infrastructure necessary to compete effectively in an increasingly digital marketplace,” Ms. Mangio said, noting that small businesses increasingly require access to an online presence, digital payments, and insights which were only available to enterprises with substantial information technology budgets. “They are transformational capabilities that can fundamentally alter the future of a business,” she said. Trade Secretary Ma. Cristina A. Roque said the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is intensifying its efforts to train MSMEs and expand their access to financing. “It is up to the MSMEs to make a success out of the opportunity that is given to them,” she said. She said that the department is also looking at strengthening the e-commerce platforms, which she described as “the cheapest way to get started” for businesses. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

## Sugar imports put on hold until 2026

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) said they agreed to halt all sugar imports until around May or June 2026. Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiù Laurel, Jr., SRA Administrator Pablo Luis S. Azcona, and SRA Board Member David Andrew L. Sanson said

in a statement that the import freeze will encourage traders to purchase domestic sugar and prop up prices. “This move assures our farmers that the current administration prioritizes their welfare... we hope this stabilizes prices now that speculation has been addressed,” Mr. Sanson was quoted as saying.

They said the freeze formalizes the policy of not importing during milling season. “There is, and never was, any talk of an import program until we finish milling, (and) have firm production figures,” Mr. Laurel and Mr. Azcona said jointly. — **Andre Christopher H. Alampay**

## Go pitches EU investors on ‘resilient’ PHL

THE Philippines continues to be “strong and resilient” and represents a “perfect” opportunity for potential European partners, according to Secretary Frederick D. Go, head of the Office of the Special Assistant to the President for Investment and Economic Affairs (OSAPIEA). “We are inviting more European companies to invest and cooperate with us. The Philippine economy remains strong and resilient, and this is the per-

fect moment to deepen our partnership and create sustainable economic opportunities together,” he said. He made the remarks at an Oct. 14 dialogue involving Philippine officials, the European Union-ASEAN Business Council (EU-ABC), and the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP). “The engagement placed strong focus on advancing negotiations for

the Philippines–EU FTA,” OSAPIEA said. “Conducted as part of the EU-ABC’s Business Mission to the Philippines, the dialogue aimed to boost trade, investment, and cooperation to drive sustained regional growth,” it added. During the event, Mr. Go welcomed the commitment of both parties to conclude FTA negotiation by mid-2026 to 2027. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD)

EXPANDED  
PAG-IBIG  
HOUSING  
PROGRAM

BAGONG PILIPINAS

# NATIONAL HOUSING EXPO 2025

OCTOBER 23-24 | WORLD TRADE CENTER, PASAY CITY

## Build Homes, Build Happiness.

Buy or reserve your dream home with  
**SAME-DAY Pag-IBIG HOUSING LOAN APPROVAL!**

Choose from thousands of quality homes by  
**FIFTY OF THE COUNTRY'S LEADING DEVELOPERS!**

SCAN HERE TO KNOW MORE

In partnership with