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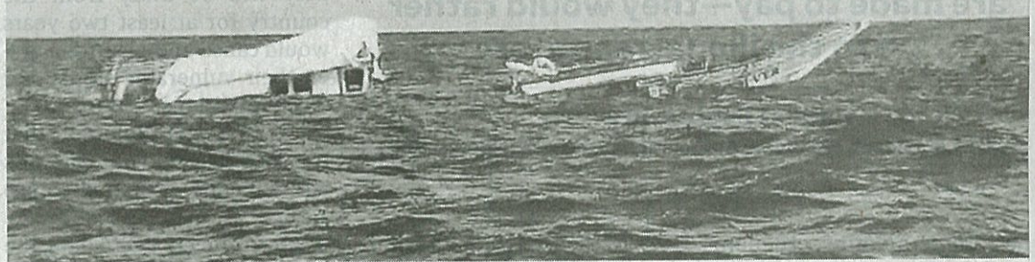
Duterte: Sinking of PH fishing boat a little maritime accident

FROM A1

By Julie M. Aurelio
@JMAurelioINQ

SANGLEY POINT, CAVITE—President Duterte on Monday dismissed the sinking of a Philippine fishing boat in the South China Sea after being hit by a Chinese trawler as a "little maritime accident" and said he would not go to war with China over the incident.

Breaking his silence a week after the incident, Mr. Duterte said the collision was the result of "miscommunication."



Sinking Filipino fishing boat Gem-Vir 1 —CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

"What happened in the collision is a maritime incident. Do not believe the dumb politicians who want to send the Philippine Navy. You do not send gray ships there. That is only a collision of ships," Mr. Duterte said in a speech during the Philippine Navy's 121st anniversary celebration in Sangley Point.

Wait for results of probe

"Maritime incident is a maritime incident. It is best investigated. And I do not now issue statement because there is no investigation and there is no result. Then the only thing we can do is wait and give the other party the right to be heard. That is important," Mr. Duterte said.

The Philippine fishing boat Gem-Vir 1 was anchored near Recto Bank—internationally known as Reed Bank—when it was hit by the Chinese trawler around midnight on June 9.

The fishing boat sank, but the Chinese vessel, instead of stopping to help the Filipino fishermen who had been thrown into the water, sailed away.

A Vietnamese fishing boat that arrived at the scene hours later rescued the Filipino fishermen.

The Philippines has filed a diplomatic protest against China over the incident and called the attention of the United Nations International Maritime Organization to the Chinese violation of the laws of the sea.

But Mr. Duterte, in his speech on Monday, dismissed the matter as a small incident between two boats.

'Just two boats'

"That's just two boats. Now you go there and create a tension. I said I am not a fool of a President to allow that. If we have to die, we must have to die in the correct way and to die with dignity. Not just by bumping into somebody," Mr. Duterte said.

Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi on Sunday said the Chinese trawler could not have intentionally hit the Gem-Vir 1, prompting Sen. Risa Hontiveros to urge Malacañang on Monday

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to stop government officials from "making wild, outlandish remarks" about the sinking of the boat and the Chinese trawler abandoning 22 Filipino fishermen after the collision.

Hontiveros lambasted Cusi for his remarks during a visit to San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, for a talk with the fishermen, who returned home on Friday with help from the Philippine Navy.

"Cusi's statements effectively side with China when he tries to downplay the severity of the matter. Is there some kind of 'fifth column' within the Cabinet that favors China's attempts to [tamp down] the issue," Hontiveros said in a statement.

"I suggest that the Duterte [administration] rein in its own people and stop them from making wild, outlandish remarks," she added.

Hontiveros said Cusi's comments were "the height of insensitivity" toward poor fishermen, "ignorance of the facts and even [bordered] on the treacherous."

The opposition senator questioned Cusi's basis for claiming the hit on the Gem-Vir 1 was unintentional.

"Is the secretary of energy now an expert [in] evaluating collisions between sea vessels? Is he now lawyering for the Chinese government," Hontiveros asked.

Fishermen insulted

Junard Insigne, brother of the fishing boat's captain, said the fishermen felt insulted by Cusi's remarks.

"He told them it was unintentional or there would have been deaths. He said the damage to the boat was caused by waves. Wasn't that an insult?" Insigne said.

Hontiveros said Cusi should apologize to the Gem-Vir 1's crew and to the nation lest he be seen as sympathetic to the Chinese side.

Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon on Sunday said China should at least apologize for the incident, but Malacañang said on Monday that it was premature to make such a demand.

Presidential spokesperson Salvador Panelo said investigations by both countries were going on and that the Philippine government first wanted to establish the facts before making a decision.

"Let's not jump into conclusion. Let's just find out what really happened," Panelo said.

He said it was also too early to say whether the incident could activate the Philippines' mutual defense treaty with the United States.

'I didn't say that'

Panelo slammed the circulation of a meme attributing to Cusi is Piñol's cochair, he said.

They want to go back

The Gem-Vir's owner, Arlyn de la Torre, and one of the fishermen, Richard Blaza, were invited to the Department of Agriculture on Monday to give an account of the collision.

Piñol quoted Blaza as saying the fishermen wanted to go back to Recto Bank despite the incident and that what happened was an "isolated incident."

Piñol said De la Torre and Blaza would submit a sworn statement to the Cabinet on Monday night and they would help the government investigate the collision.

There were reports on Sunday that President Duterte had called a Cabinet meeting for Monday for a discussion of the sinking of the Gem-Vir 1.

The reports also said Mr. Duterte had invited the Gem-Vir 1's captain, Junel Insigne, to a meeting in Malacañang.

Panelo and Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea said the President did not call a Cabinet meeting and did not ask for a meeting with Insigne.

Junard Insigne said his brother started to travel to Manila with Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources officials on Sunday for a meeting with Mr. Duterte, but gave up when their vehicle reached Oriental Mindoro.

Junard Insigne said his brother abandoned the trip and returned to San Jose because he was unwell. —WITH REPORTS FROM MARLON RAMOS, KARL R. OCAMPO AND MADONNA T. VIROLA INQ

him a statement to the effect that the crew of the Gem-Vir 1 were just "maligning the Chinese," they "could be hallucinating" and that they "could be charged as well."

"This meme puts me, as well as the Office of the President, in a bad light, as we are placed in a position which suggests that we are siding with the Chinese," Panelo said.

He said there was no official record that would show he issued the controversial statement.

Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said the Cabinet economic development and security, justice, and peace clusters met on Monday to discuss the incident.

Nograles said the discussion had two objectives: the protection of Filipino fishermen and the Philippines' exercise of its rights in its exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol was designated chair of a group that would provide assistance to the crew of the Gem-Vir 1, Nograles said.

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Duterte to await Recto Bank probe report

By Bernadette D. Nicolas @BNicolasBM

PRESIDENT Duterte on Monday finally broke his silence on the alleged hit-and-run incident at Recto Bank involving a Chinese vessel and a Filipino fishing boat, as he rejected calls to send ships in the area—a move that he said would make the situation worse.

"That is a maritime incident. *Wag kayong maniwala sa pulitiko na bobo. Gusto papuntahin ang* Navy [Don't believe the politics of fools. They want to send the Navy]. You do not send gray ships there. *Banggaan lang ng barko 'yan* [It's just a collision of boats]. Do not make it worse because that's a fertile ground for...," Duterte said in a speech during the 121st Philippine Navy Anniversary at Sangley Point in Cavite.

Duterte also defended his silence for a few days before speaking out on the issue.

"Maritime incident is a maritime incident. It is best investigated. And I do not issue [a] statement because there is no investigation and there is no result. Then the only thing we can do is to wait and give the other party the right to be heard," he said.

Days after the Chinese Embassy disputed the Filipino fishermen's account of events on June 9 at Recto Bank and even after the Philippine government has already filed a diplomatic protest, Malacañang on Monday struck a cautious tone, citing the need to await the results of further investigation being conducted separately by China and the Philippines.

Presidential Spokesman and Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador S. Panelo said it is important to know first what really transpired, given two versions of the incident, but denied that the Palace is casting doubt on the Filipino fishermen's account.

"Not doubting but we want to know the facts since there is a contrary claim," Panelo said in a briefing on Monday.

Cluster meeting

MEANWHILE, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Alexei B. Nograles on Monday said that what happened "appears to be an allision"—and not collision—based on preliminary investigation.

Asked to clarify if this means the Chinese side did not deliberately ram the Filipino boat, Nograles told the BusinessMirror: "We cannot jump to that conclusion. That has not been established."

Nograles's remarks followed a joint meeting of the Economic Development and Security, Justice and Peace clusters on Monday to tackle issues on the Recto Bank incident.

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He noted initial action was undertaken by the Philippine government, with the filing of a strongly-worded diplomatic protest that was handed over to the Deputy Chief of Mission of the Chinese Government on June 13.

"The objective of the [cluster] meeting was twofold: the protection of our countrymen and the exercise of our nation's rights in our Exclusive Economic Zone," Nograles said in a separate statement.

Piñol's mandate

MEANWHILE, Nograles said Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel F. Piñol was designated chairman of the government response team focused on assisting the 22 affected fishermen while Region 4B CORDS-Mimaropa and Energy Secretary Alfonso G. Cusi was assigned as the colead.

Piñol said the DA will provide 11 fiberglass boats to every two families of the crew so they could have an alternative livelihood while their salvaged boat is still being repaired.

The fishermen will also each get a P25,000 loan with no collateral and zero interest, payable in three years.

Piñol called Richard Blaza, the cook of the F/B *Gemver 1*, which sank last June 9, on Monday to personally learn what really transpired. He presented Blaza to the media.

The agriculture chief said he would not also discourage fishermen from going back to the Recto Bank and its nearby waters since it is part of the country's territory. "There's no reason for us to tell our Filipino fishermen to stop what they are doing. Assessing on and basing on the statement of the witness, we consider this as an isolated incident," Piñol told reporters in an interview. ***With Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas***

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No price hike for hotdogs, poultry products

By LOUISE MAUREEN SIMEON

There will be no increase in the prices of hotdogs sourced from fowl and similar processed meat products after President Duterte retained the lower tariffs on some poultry products.

Duterte signed Executive Order No. 82 on June 13, retaining the lower tariffs to cushion the impact of higher prices of goods on consumers.

The EO retained the current most favored nation (MFN) tariff rates on imported mechanically deboned meat (MDM) or separated meat of chicken at five percent, and meat and edible offal of turkeys not cut in pieces at 20 percent.

The MDM is vital raw material used in meat processing. It is a paste-like meat product produced by forcing pureed or ground beef, pork, turkey or chicken under high pressure through a sieve or similar device to separate the bone from the edible meat tissue.

"The present economic condition warrants the continued

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application of the reduced rate of duties on certain agricultural products to mitigate the impact of high prices of goods," the EO read. In 2017, Duterte issued EO No. 23, prolonging the temporary reduced rate on certain agricultural products as a concession to trade partners, who allowed the Philippines to extend the quota on rice imports.

The extension of rice imports quota was meant to protect Filipino farmers from cheap imported agricultural goods. The reduced rates under EO 23 were supposed to take effect until June 30, 2020 or until such time that a measure amending the law on rice tariffication is enacted, whichever comes first.

The National Economic and Development Authority recommended to retain the tariff rates under EO 23 for mechanically deboned chicken and turkey meat and its offals. Because of EO 82, the lower import duties on the poultry products will remain until Dec. 31 next year.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said the EO would ensure low-cost processed meat products for consumers.

Welcomed

The Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. (PAMPI) welcomed the EO, saying Duterte's move to retain lower tariffs reflects the government's efforts to spur the growth of the local manufacturing industry.

"We assured DTI (Department of Trade and Industry) and our consumers that we will not increase our prices," PAMPI president Felix Tiukinhoy said in a text message to **The STAR.**

PAMPI earlier said an increase in tariff rates from five percent to 40 percent would escalate prices of hotdogs and canned meat products that contain MDM by 12 to 17 percent.

"MDM chicken is a vital raw material in the manufacture of processed meat products and is not locally produced. This action sends a strong signal to local and foreign investors that the investment climate in the Philippines is fair, attractive and competitive," he added.

PAMPI noted that the meat processing industry fully supports government's efforts to promote economic growth while ensuring affordable food products to its people.

It was also PAMPI that filed a petition asking government to keep the tariff rate on MDM of chicken at five percent.

While PAMPI sought for retention of the low tariff rate on MDM, poultry growers on the other hand, have called on the government to raise the tariff on imported MDM to 40 percent as a form of protection for local growers.

It was in 2012 when the 40 percent tariff on MDM was reduced to five percent as a concession to the quantitative restriction (QR) on rice imports.

Under EO 23, the tariff rates on agricultural products including chicken MDM must be brought back to its previous levels once the QR is removed.

PAMPI said the use of MDM in the country as raw material ingredient for processed meat has contributed to the affordability of the protein source, especially in challenging times of high inflationary effects caused by a number of uncontrollable factors.

The MDM has been used since the late 1960s in certain meat and meat products such as hotdogs, luncheon meat and sausages and does not compete against table grade meat. **– With Alexis Romero**

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Rody on sinking: It was a little maritime accident

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Duterte yesterday downplayed the ramming of a Filipino fishing boat by a Chinese vessel near Recto Bank as a "little maritime accident," as he stressed the need to investigate the incident and to give China the opportunity to explain its side.

Breaking his silence on the incident, Duterte said going to war would be the "most stupid thing" as a nuclear war would dry up the Earth and destroy everything.

"Stay out of trouble. Just build on our own. *Huwag muna tayong makialam* (Let's not interfere). Do not allow a little maritime accident, or intentional, (make us) go to war. *Pahinga ka muna. Pahinga muna kayo* (Get some rest)," the President said in speech at the 121st anniversary of the Philippine Navy in Cavite.

"Maritime incident is a maritime incident. It is best investigated. And I do not now issue a statement because there is no investigation and there is no result," he said.

"The only thing we can do is to wait and give the other party the right to be heard. That's important. China, you have given a lot of things. What's the truth?"

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Rody From Page 1

he added.

Duterte said tension should not arise just because of a collision of two boats.

"*Dalawang bangka lang 'yan* (It's just two small boats). Now you go there and create a tension. I said, *hindi ako gago na presidente na papayag noon* (I'm not a stupid president to allow that to happen). If we have to die, we must have to die in the correct way and to die with dignity. *Hindi yung basta bangga ka nang ka-bangga diyan* (You don't just get involved in a collision)," he said.

The President also chided politicians who – he claimed – were calling for the deployment of Navy ships to Recto Bank.

"*Huwag kayong maniwala sa mga politiko na bobo, gusto papuntahin yung* Navy (Do

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not believe the stupid politicians who want to deploy the Navy). You do not send gray ships there. *Banggaan lang ng barko 'yan* (It's just a collision of ships), do not make it worse," he said.

Duterte said while he wanted to see some action, he is not in his "boyhood age" anymore.

"I have a duty that is a burden, sometimes more than I can carry. I almost cry," he said.

"You read a lot about fumigation, anger, just about anything. You know, we are ruled as a civilized nation, and as members of the community by the laws that govern whatever happen in the seas as we go along our business," he said.

"There will be rules for a military confrontation, there will be rules for a mistaken identity attack, there is a rule for fishermen's boats, there is a rule for an aircraft carrier bumping a fishing boat."

But Malacañang said it is inviting Chinese Ambassador Zhao Jianhua to explain China's version of the event.

"He was invited so we can talk to him about the final version. What we got so far is unofficial," Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana said.

The defense and economic clusters of the Cabinet met yesterday to discuss the Recto Bank incident. They agreed to assist the 22 fishermen who figured in the collision.

Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol has been tasked to take charge of the government's effort to assist the affected fishermen.

Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi, who previously said the ramming may have been unintentional, was designated co-leader of the response effort.

Nograles said Piñol has been directed to tap all available government resources to assist the fishermen, with components of the support package to come from other government agencies.

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Richard Blaza, the cook of *F/B Gemvir*, describes the sinking of their fishing boat during a press conference at the Department of Agriculture yesterday. MICHAEL VARCAS

Phl sovereignty not negotiable — Palace

The Philippines is no slave to China, Malacañang said yesterday, as it faces mounting criticism over President Duterte's silence on the sinking of a Filipino fishing boat after it was hit by a Chinese vessel near Recto Bank in the West Philippine Sea last June 9.

Presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said Duterte is just being cautious and is waiting for all the facts to come in before making a declaration on the incident.

"We can never be slaves to anyone," Panelo said at a press briefing yesterday.

"We have to determine exactly which among the two versions is true. We have to cautiously walk on this. We can't issue statements without the facts," Panelo added. "(The President) is not silent. He is waiting for the facts to set in before he makes any declaration."

After leaving *F/B Gem-Vir I (Gemver)* capsized and its 22 crew floundering in the water, the Chinese vessel hurriedly left without rescuing the fishermen. A Vietnamese fishing boat arrived hours later to help the

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Phl sovereignty

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fishermen.

China, through its embassy, has disputed the Filipino fishermen's account and insisted that the Chinese ship did not abandon them. The Chinese embassy also claimed that Chinese ship *Yuemaobinyu* 42212 decided to leave after it was "suddenly besieged" by seven or eight Filipino boats.

In a recent interview, fishing boat owner Felix dela Torre said he felt that the Philippines is a slave to China because Filipinos no longer have rights over their territory.

Panelo insisted that the Duterte administration would not allow any assault on Philippine sovereignty. "Sovereignty is never a subject of negotiation," the spokesman said, adding that the Chinese fishermen are not allowed to fish in Recto Bank.

"*Eh basta't teritoryo natin, nandoon sila – mali iyon siyempre* (If it's our territory and they're there, of course it's wrong)," Panelo said.

"But we do not know if they are fishing there... there are conflicting versions (of the incident)," he added.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol also said it was just appropriate for Duterte to keep his silence on the issue.

"The President was right in showing restraint in making decisions over that incident. There are a lot of angles that need to be looked at. It is just right that he did not meddle immediately. Why will he speak when the investigation has yet to be clear?" Piñol said at a briefing on Monday.

"People would like the President to respond right away but we have to understand that any statement made by the President is a policy statement. When he is calm and restrained that is because he wants to get a clear picture of the whole thing," he added.

"We have to understand that the President has to listen to all sides and get every angle possible. The restraint is understandable," Piñol

Also at the press conference, Piñol presented boat cook Richard Blaza and Arlyn dela Torre who owns the fishing boat.

The two, however, were advised not to issue any statement, as their affidavit would be submitted to the Cabinet cluster meeting.

"To those making up stories that the fishermen are not really fishermen and that this is just a drama for us to be angry with China, please stop. Those are not true," Piñol said.

"What they are hurt about is the stories that they intentionally wanted to be rammed (by the Chinese vessel) so they get to be paid," he added.

He also said it was still too early to say if the ramming incident was intentional or not.

"Let the proper investigation body establish that based on the testimonies of both sides," Piñol said.

A clearer picture of the Recto Bank incident is expected very soon, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said yesterday as it concluded its fact-finding investigation.

The PCG has launched a probe on the incident to determine if it was a deliberate ramming or a maritime accident.

"Our investigators were able to get the statement of all the fishermen involved. The report is almost done," PCG spokesman Capt. Armand Balilo said.

The investigation report was being finalized yesterday afternoon.

Even before the release of the report, Balilo stressed the PCG was unable to respond to the incident because they did not receive a distress call.

"We did not receive any distress call from the incident. We were only able to learn about it from the task force on West Philippines Sea and through reports we received from families of the fishermen," he said in an interview. – **Alexis Romero, Pia Lee-Brago, Louise Maureen Simeon, Edu Punay,**

The Manila Times

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Fertilizer prices up in May

THE average dealers' prices of fertilizers increased in May this year compared to figures of the same period in 2018, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) said.

In its monthly report on "Updates on Fertilizer Prices," PSA said price increases were observed in the four fertilizer varieties namely urea, complete, Ammosul and Ammophos.

Year-on-year (yoy), urea registered the highest increase at 14.3 percent, followed by Ammophos, Ammosul, and complete at 8.3 percent, 7.2 percent and 4.4 percent, respectively. PSA said increases were seen in all regions except for Ammosul in the Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon (Calabarzon) region where it posted an annual price decline of 2.3 percent.

But the PSA said the monthly average dealers' price of urea in May fell by 0.5 percent to P1,148.20 per sack from P1,153.59 per sack in April. Compared with month-ago level, the average dealers' price of urea fell in 10 regions with the highest (P1,402.50 per sack) noted in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

For the complete variety, price stood at P1,154.12 per sack, 0.3 percent higher from its month ago level. Increases were noted in eight regions, PSA said.

Average price of Ammosul was P631.88 per sack, slightly up from month-ago's level. PSA said the highest was P963.75 per sack in ARMM while the lowest was P550.24 per sack in Davao Region.

The average dealer price of Ammophos was P997.06 per sack, up 0.1 percent from its month-ago's P997.93 per sack. Higher prices were posted in all regions on a yearly basis, PSA said.

Meanwhile, in an effort to increase farmers' productivity, President Duterte has committed to give the Department of Agriculture (DA) at least P30 billion for the national fertilizer support program.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol said the National Fertilizer Support Program, which will be done through the "Roll-Over Loaning Scheme", will provide local farmers access to low-cost fertilizers which is seen to boost the country's crop production particularly rice and corn.

With proper fertilization in place, farmers could increase their rice output by at least two metric tons per hectare, Piñol said. **EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ**

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Govt echoes China line

Boat sinking a 'maritime incident, plain and simple' – Piñol

BY ANNA LEAH E. GONZALES

A CHINESE vessel caused the sinking of a Filipino fishing boat in disputed waters, but it remains to be seen whether the "ramming" was intentional, the government said on Monday.

Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel Piñol, who has been designated by Malacañang as the point person in the case, said the matter was a "maritime incident, plain and simple" that was being blown "out of proportion."

The Philippines, which filed a diplomatic protest last Wednesday following the June 9 sinking of the *F/B Gem-Ver* (earlier identified as the *Gemvir 1*) off Reed Bank in the West Philippine (South China) Sea, was warned by Beijing last week from politicizing what it called an "ordinary maritime traffic accident."

"It was a ramming incident. Was it intentional? That is something that will have to be established by investigation," Pinol told reporters.

The "gist of the fishermen's complaint," he added, was that the Chinese fishing vessel had failed to render assistance.

Piñol's appointment as point person came after

➤EchoesA2

AID FOR FISHERS Agriculture Secretary Emmanuel 'Manny' Piñol on Monday shows to media a photo of the sunken Filipino fishing vessel after it was rammed by a Chinese vessel while the vessel's cook, Richard Balza, looks on. Piñol heads a group tasked to help the fishers. PHOTO BY RUY MARTINEZ

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two Cabinet clusters — Economic Development and Security, Justice and Peace (headed by Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez 3rd and Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, respectively) — were ordered to lead discussions about the sinking.

In a statement, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi would be the co-lead in further talks to determine the liabilities involved and the most effective means to obtain justice.

"These efforts will be complemented by further investigations to be jointly led by the Maritime Authority and the Philippine Coast Guard," Nograles said.

Duterte silence defended

With President Rodrigo Duterte having come under fire for not personally addressing the issue, Piñol also said "you have to understand the position of the president because he has to listen to all sides."

"President Duterte was right in showing restraint in making rush decisions over that incident in Recto Bank because *ngayon lumalabas 'yung mga detalye na magpapatunay na marami pang anggulo na dapat tingnan* (now there are details coming out that show there are other angles to consider)," he said.

Senator-elect Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go, a former presidential aide, also came to Duterte's defense, issuing a statement that the President was monitoring the situation.

"President Rodrigo Duterte has already been informed about this incident and is closely monitoring the situation," he said.

"Our stand is to diplomatically work with the Chinese government to investigate the matter fairly, to impose certain measures so that such incidents can be avoided, and to impose sanctions against those behind the recent incident," Go added.

"We are currently waiting for the result of the ongoing investigation of both the Chinese government and our government to determine exactly whether the collision was a maritime accident or an intentional act on the part of the Chinese vessel."

Filipinos not 'slaves'

Malacañang also rebuffed a statement by *Gem-Ver* owner Felix de la Torre that the incident made him feel that Filipinos were being made "slaves of China," with Palace spokesman Salvador Panelo telling reporters "we can never be slaves to anyone."

Piñol said the boat's cook, Richard Blaza, had denied that Filipino fishers were constantly being harassed by Chinese vessels.

"This is the first incident na *nabangga* sila (where they were hit)… So, *'yung palabas na para bang aping-api tayo dun, inaapi mga mangingisda, 'yung* statement ng witness says otherwise (the witness' statement belies the claim that we are being abused, the fisherman are being abused)," he said.

"Our request is for the people to exercise restraint in handling this issue. Don't make speculations and let's look at this calmly because this will have a big impact on our international relations and we don't want this incident to be blown out of proportion."

Cabinet 'fifth column'?

As this developed, Sen. Ana Theresia "Risa" Hontiveros criticized Piñol's co-lead, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi, for saying the sinking was unintentional.

"Secretary Alfonso Cusi's comments are the height of insensitivity to our poor fisherfolk, ignorance of facts and even bordering on the treacherous," Hontiveros said in a statement.

"It becomes completely understandable, then, why Junel Insigne, captain of the *F/B GEM-VIR 1*, backed out of the meeting with President Rodrigo Duterte. With public officials like Secretary Cusi, who needs enemies?" she added.

"Is there some kind of 'fifth column' within the Cabinet that favors China's attempts to silence the issue, instead of trying to investigate the matter thoroughly and look after our fishermen?"

Collision likely unintentional

A former member of the Board of Marine Inquiry, meanwhile, also said it appeared the incident did not appear to be deliberate.

Speaking at the sidelines of a maritime forum in Bataan, Capt. Demy Ferrer said it would be stupid for the Chinese vessel's captain to risk his boat.

"In my opinion, the Chinese vessel suffered [sic] a poor maneuvering," Ferrer said.

Those aboard the *Yuemaobinyu 42212* would have also been aware that an intentional ramming would create an international incident, he added.

Still, Ferrer said he was not rejecting the *Gem-Ver* crew's account of the incident, noting that an investigation had yet to be completed.

WITH REPORTS FROM BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO, RAFFY AYENG AND RALPH U. VILLANUEVA

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FILIPINO MIRROR MEDIA GROUP CORPORATION
• SALAMIN NG KATOTOHANAN •

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DA AAYUDA SA PINOY FISHERMEN

UMAPELA si Agriculture Secretary Manny Piñol sa publiko na itigil na ang anumang kuwento sa isyu ng banggaan ng Chinese vessel at bangkang pangisda ng mga Pinoy sa Recto Bank ng West Philippine Sea.

Ito ay kasunod ng paglutang ng isang crew ng FB Gimver 1 na si Richard Blaza, kasama si Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Regional Director Elazir Salilig ng Mimaropa sa tanggapan ng Department of Agriculture (DA)

Sa isang press briefing, nanindigan si Blaza na totoong binangga sila ng Chinese vessel at hindi drama o gawa-gawa lang ito.

Tanging hinanakit, aniya, nila ay hindi sila tinulungan at basta na lamang iniwan ng mga Tsino nang lumubog na ang kanyang bangkang pangisda

Sinuguro naman ni Piñol na mabibigyan ng tulong ng DA ang may-ari ng bangka at mga mangingisda.

Nabatid na nakikipagugnayan na rin ang DA sa Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) upang matulungan ang mga mangingisda na dumaranas ng trauma dahil sa nangyari.

Kasabay nito, pinabulaanan ni Piñol na may inayos siyang meeting kay Pangulong Duterte para iharap ang mga mangingisda habang 'no comment' din ang kalihim sa payahag ni Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi na hindi sinadya ang pagbangga sa Pinoy fishermen.

BENEDICT ABAYGAR, JR.

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AGRICULTURE Secretary Manny Piñol speaks with Arlinda dela Torre (left), owner of the sunken fishing boat (F/B) Gem-Vir, and cook Richard Blaza during a press conference at the Department of Agriculture in Quezon City. (Alvin Kasiban)

PILIPINO STAR NGAYON
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Nasa kaliwa ang kusinero ng bangkang lumubog malapit sa Recto Bank na si Richard Blaza at ang may-ari ng bangka na si Arlinda dela Torre nang humarap kina Department of Agriculture Secretary Manny Piñol at Elizer Salilig (gitna) sa tanggapan ng kalihim kaugnay ng insidente ng pagbangga ng isang Chinese vessel sa bangka ng mga mangingisdang Pilipino kamakailan. (Kuha ni Michael Varcas)

Manila Standard

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Dansal replaces Aquino as NFA council member

NATIONAL Food Authority Administrator Judy Carol Dansal was appointed by President Rodrigo Duterte as an NFA council member, replacing Jason Aquino.

Documents released by the Palace revealed on Monday that Dansal, who was the deputy administrator of the agency, will serve the unexpired term of Aquino.

Aquino was previously relieved back in September for "singlehandedly" aggravating the country's inflation with the rice crisis under his watch.

"You are hereby appointed Member, NFA Council, NFA, to serve the unexpired term of office that began on 01 July, 2018 and will end on 30 June 2019, vice Jason Laureano Y. Aquino," her appointment paper read.

Dansal, along with former NFA chief Angelito Banayo and four others, was earlier charged with graft cases in 2014 before the Office of the Ombudsman over a rice smuggling case. **Nat Mariano**

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NFA Council member named

PRESIDENT Duterte has named National Food Authority deputy administrator Judy Carol Layus Dansal as member of the NFA Council vice reigned administrator Jason Aquino.

The President, on June 11, signed the appointment papers Dansal who will serve the Aquino's unexpired term in the council until June 30, 2019.

Aquino, who resigned as NFA administrator in April 2018, was also a member of the council for a term of year or from July 1, 2018 to June 30, 2019.

Deputy administrator Tomas Escarez has been acting as officer in charge since Aquino's resignation.

Dansal, a lawyer, is deputy administrator for marketing operations but she has occupied various positions in the agency including Enforcement, Investigation and Prosecution department manager, Manpower Services department chief, and Industry Services department. – ***Jocelyn Montemayor***

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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Career exec named new NFA chief

President Duterte is set to appoint a career official as administrator of the National Food Authority (NFA), Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea said.

Medialdea told **The STAR** recently that NFA Deputy Administrator for marketing operations Judy Carol Dansal would be named the next chief of the grains agency.

"She's a career official," Medialdea said.

Dansal will succeed Jason Aquino, who was ordered dismissed from service by the Office of the Ombudsman

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Career **From Page 1**

over the smuggling of more than P34 million worth of Vietnamese rice in Cagayan de Oro City.

Aquino and two other customs officials were ordered dismissed for grave misconduct last April.

The former NFA chief is also one of the respondents in the graft and economic sabotage complaint filed by Sen. Panfilo Lacson over the alleged rice smuggling.

NFA Deputy Administrator Tomas Escarez was designated officer-in-charge after Aquino stepped down from his post last year.

Once appointed NFA chief, Dansal will serve in a concurrent capacity as member of the NFA council.

She was named member of the NFA Council last June 11, her appointment paper showed.

Dansal will serve the unexpired term of Aquino, which started on July 1, 2018 and will end on June 30, 2019.

Duterte also appointed Demetrio Tuason as special envoy of the president to the inauguration of Nayib Armando Bukele as president of El Salvador.

The Manila Times

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Duterte names new NFA council member

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has appointed National Food Authority (NFA) Deputy Administrator Judy Carol Dansal as a member of the NFA Council.

Dansal will replace NFA Administrator Jason Aquino, who was ordered dismissed by the Office of the Ombudsman earlier this year.

Duterte signed Dansal's letter of appointment on June 11.

The Office of the Ombudsman in April found Aquino guilty of administrative charges of grave misconduct over the alleged smuggling of about P34.68 million worth of Vietnamese rice through the Cagayan de Oro port.

Duterte also appointed Philippine Ambassador to Mexico Demetrio Tuason as his special envoy to the inauguration of Hayib Armando Bukele as president of the Republic of El Salvador, which will be held on June 1 in the City of San Salvador, El Salvador.

RALPH U. VILLANUEVA

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PhilMech finalizing rules in distributing farm gear

THE Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization is currently finalizing the guidelines for the farm mechanization component of the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Program.

PhilMech Executive Director Dr. Baldwin G. Jallorina, in a statement, said the guidelines will include the identification of the 1,200 municipalities that would facilitate the deployment of farm equipment and machines under RCEP over a period of six years.

"Each of the municipality should have a viable farmers organization with at least 100 hectares of irrigated rice lands. It would be easier for PhilMech to deploy or distribute farm machines in the 1,200 municipalities if the rice farmers there are organized," he said.

Jallorina said that before the actual deployment and distribution of farm machines in the 1,200 municipalities commence, PhilMech would conduct "mind-setting" activities like information drive and technical briefings to prepare Filipino rice farmers to adopt to mechanization.

However, he said that a "one-size-fits-all" approach would not be used by PhilMech in increasing the farm mechanization level of the 1,200 municipalities.

Jallorina said there are municipalities that already have a certain degree of farm mechanization while there are those that still rely largely on human or animal power in the various phases of rice production.

Hence, he said, PhilMech will have to study carefully what type of farm equipment and machines would be deployed over a cluster of municipalities.

Of the P10 billion Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), some P5 billion will be allocated for mechanization of rice farms, P3 billion for provision of high-yielding in bred rice seeds, P1 billion for credit support, and P1 billion for extension support and education of rice farmers.

The Philippine Rice Research Institute (PhilRice) will take the lead in providing high-yielding inbred rice seeds to farmers while the Agricultural Training Institute (ATI) and Technical Education and Skills Development Authority will undertake the training of farmers and extension workers. PHilMech will also develop and provide the modules for the training of rice farmers.

Meanwhile, Land Bank of the Philippines and the Development Bank of the Philippines will support the credit component of RCEP.

Based on studies by the Department of Agriculture the cost of producing one kilo of palay (unmilled rice) in the Philippines is P12.72 while it is P6.22 in Vietnam and P8.86 in Thailand.

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PH NOBODY'S SLAVE -- PALACE

By Efren Montano

MAKING clear that the Philippines is not a slave of China, Malacañang yesterday explained President Duterte is just being cautious before making any statement about the Recto Bank incident.

Presidential Spokesman Salvador Panelo made the explanation after Felix dela Torre, the owner of the sunken F/B Gem-Ver fishing boat, said he feels that Filipinos have no right in their own territory.

"Parang alipin po tayo ng China. Parang wala tayong karapatan sa sarili nating nasasakupan (It's like we are slaves of China. It's like we have no rights over our own territory)," Dela Torre said.

Dela Torre's boat sank after it was hit by a Chinese vessel while it was anchored near the Recto Bank in the West Philippine Sea. The 22 Filipinos who were in the boat were said to have been abandoned by the Chinese vessel and were rescued by a Vietnamese vessel three hours later.

In his press briefing yesterday, Panelo said that the Philippines is not China's slave, and that issues of sovereignty is off the table.

"Siyempre (Obviously), the response is we can never be slaves to anyone... That includes every country in the world," he said.

Malacañang earlier condemned the act of abandoning the 22 Filipino fishermen to the mercy of the waters by the Chinese vessel, calling the Chinese action barbaric and inhumane. However, the captain of the Chinese vessel denied the act.

"We are responsible. We are cautious, the President is," Panelo said.

"As I said, the President, as a lawyer and as President, will have to wait for all the facts to set in before he makes a declaration or any move," he added.

The Palace official said that Malacañang is not doubting the statement of the fishermen and said that its anger about the abandonment will stay until China proves that their vessel did not abandon the Filipino fishing crew.

"Not doubting but we want to know the facts since there is a contrary claim," Panelo said.

"Kung kinwentuhan ka ba naman na iniwan ka doon ng ganoon-ganoon lang, aba siyempre magre-react ka agad. Pero yung ating nirereklamo nagsabi 'Hoy, 'di namin ginawa 'yan?' Ha? Oh sige nga (Of course you will get mad as well if you hear that they were just abandoned there. But the subject of our complaint is denying it. Really? Okay). Show us," he added.

"Well we take it (statement of the fishermen) at its face value until proven otherwise by other contradicting testimonials and proof," he continued.

President Duterte has yet to make a public comment about the incident since it was reported on June 12 via statement of Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana. The incident was said to take place on June 9.

Since then, the Department of Foreign Affairs has filed a diplomatic protest against China's act of abandoning the Filipino fishermen. The Department of National Defense is also investigating the incident.

BOAT CAPTAIN

Junel Insigne, the boat captain of F/B GEMVIR1 that collided with a Chinese ship, could not meet with President Rodrigo Duterte as scheduled.

Insigne was supposed to travel to Metro Manila from Occidental Mindoro after he was invited by Malacañang to meet with the President following the incident in the West Philippine Sea where a Chinese fishing trawler rammed their fishing boat and abandoned it at Recto Bank last June 10.

Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Regional Director Elizer Salilig, Allan Gatus, said that Insigne was still too "traumatized" by the Reed Bank incident to travel to Metro Manila.

"Noong pagbangga, akala namin pagbalik niya tutulungan kami, biglang sumindi 'yong ilaw na marami, dahil nakita kaming lubog na... Ayon, pinatay nila ulit 'yong ilaw palayo na ulit sa amin (When they hit us, we thought they were going to help us. Their lights were all aimed at us and when they saw us sinking... that's when they turned off their light and left)," Insigne said, recalling the night of the incident.

A Vietnamese vessel rescued the 22 distressed Filipino fishermen.

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Tariff cut to ensure stable processed meat prices

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

PRESIDENT Duterte ordered the retention of the 5-percent tariff on mechanically deboned meat (MDM) of chicken and turkey until next year, a move seen to ensure affordable and stable prices of processed meat.

The President, signed and issued Executive Order 82 on June 13, which stemmed from a recommendation of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) for the tariff rates under Executive Order 23 for MDM of chicken, turkey and turkey meat and its offals should be maintained.

The tariff was supposed to have reverted back to 40 percent following the enactment of the rice tarrification law in February.

But the EO said "the present economic condition warrants the continued application of the reduced rate of duties on certain agricultural products to mitigate the impact of high prices of goods."

MDM is a raw material in the manufacture of processed meat products like hotdogs and chicken nuggets and canned meats like meat loaf and is not locally produced.

Ramon Lopez, secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry said the retention of the low tariff is needed to keep the cost of producing basic canned meat products lower.

Good news to consumers. The retention of the low tariff is needed to keep the cost of producing basic canned meat products lower.

"With the signing of EO, There is no pressure to increase prices," Lopez said in a text message.

Lopez said meat processors have not increased prices.

Under EO 23, which was issued by Duterte in 2017, the import duties on MDM rate is reduced to 5 percent which shall be effective until June 30, 2020 or until such time the rice trade liberalization takes effect, or whichever comes first.

The lowering of tariff was among the concessions made by the Philippines to secure the approval of the World Trade Organization (WTO) members to extend its quantitative restriction on rice imports.

The Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. said supports government's efforts to promote economic growth while ensuring affordable food products to its people.

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DTI shuts door on hike of canned meat prices with 5% MDM tariff EO

By Elijah Felice E. Rosales
@alyasjah

IT is a win for the buying public. The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) will thumb down any and all appeals to increase canned meat prices following President Duterte's decision to retain the 5-percent tariff on mechanically deboned meat (MDM).

Trade Secretary Ramon M. Lopez said the DTI will block any petition to adjust upward the prices of canned meat listed under the suggested retail price (SRP) list. He argued that canned meat makers managed to keep prices stable even before, more so now that the 5-percent duty on MDM is retained.

Under Executive Order (EO) 82, the President maintained the reduced rate of 5 percent on MDM until December 31, 2020.

"They have not increased [prices even before]. So, good, they will not increase [any longer]," Lopez said in a text message. Tariff on MDM, a key component of processed meat products, reverted to 40 percent in May in line with EO 23.

Under EO 23, duties on concessionary agricultural products, including MDM, should go back to their 2012 rates once the country's rice import cap is lifted and converted into tariffs. The rice trade liberalization law, which converted the import cap into tariffs, took effect in March.

The Bureau of Customs in May then issued a memorandum circular authorizing the collection of higher duties on former concessions.

Citing the higher cost of production, meat processors warned earlier they will need to increase prices of their products. Hot dog maker Frabelle Corp., for one, had planned to implement a price hike of at least 20 percent on hot dogs that cater to lower-income households.

However, with the issuance of EO 82, Trade Undersecretary Ruth B. Castelo said in a text message that meat processors "should retain [current prices] since there is no reason to move their prices" under the 5-percent MDM tariff regime.

Frabelle Group of Cos. President Francisco T. Laurel Jr. for his part said the firm is no longer pursuing its initial plan of increasing hot dog prices. However, he argued the reduced rate should be kept indefinitely until the Philippines develops its own MDM production.

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"Yes, we will hold all prices and not increase," Laurel told the BusinessMirror.

The President, in approving EO 82, said the present economic condition warrants the continued application of lower tariffs on certain farm products to avert potential price hikes. He also said the National Economic and Development Authority Board recommended the retention of reduced rate on MDM.

On the other hand, Laban Konsyumer Inc. President Victorio Mario A. Dimagiba said the government should refund meat processors and importers who paid the higher tariff of 40 percent.

"Customs issued a circular that imposed 40-percent tariff on MDM imports that entered the Philippines after the rice tariff law was signed. This circular should be revoked because this could be used by meat manufacturers as a reason to demand for one good round of price increase," Dimagiba said over the phone.

"Customs, if it has collected any, should return the money to the meat importers," he added.

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Duterte retains tariff on chicken MDM at 5%

By Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas @jearcalas
& Bernadette D. Nicolas @BNicolasBM

THE tariff on mechanically deboned meat (MDM) of chicken and turkey will remain at 5 percent until 2020 after President Duterte followed the recommendation of the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) and signed Executive Order (EO) 82.

"MDM is the one that is primarily used in our processed products. [The government is] trying to contain the increase in prices of canned goods because these are usually consumed by the poor."—Sombilla

As reported in the BusinessMirror ***(See, "'EO on MDM tariff up for Duterte's signature,'" June 10, 2019),*** the issuance of the EO is expected to avert increases in the prices of processed meat products, which are popular among most low-income households. This is because chicken MDM is a key component for the manufacture of hot dogs and canned luncheon meat.

EO 82, which was signed on June 13 and released to the media on Monday, also retained the lower tariff rate on frozen turkey meat and turkey offal at 20 percent.

The new EO shall take effect immediately after its publication in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation, and shall be applicable until December 31, 2020.

"Whereas, the present economic condition warrants the continued application of reduced rate of duties on certain agricultural products to mitigate the impact of high prices of goods," read EO 82's introductory clause stating the rationale for the issuance.

The President is allowed to increase, reduce or remove existing rates of import duty upon the recommendation of the Neda if Congress is not in session.

EO 82 repeals the memorandum circular, which temporarily reverted the tariff on chicken MDM to 40 percent, issued by the Bureau of Customs (BOC) on May 23.

The BOC also told the BusinessMirror that it will continue to collect retroactively more money from importers who were assessed a lower tariff even after Republic Act (RA) 11203 took effect on March 5. However, a consumer group on Monday said the BOC should in fact return the balance of the rates shelled out by importers when it immediately imposed the 40-percent tariff on them right after the

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rice trade liberalization law was enacted. ***(See related story below, "DTI shuts door on hike of canned meat prices with 5% MDM tariff EO").***

Duterte issued EO 23 in 2017 to retain the lower tariff rates on select farm goods, including chicken MDM, while Congress worked on amending RA 8178 to remove the caps on rice imports.

After RA 11203, or the rice trade liberalization law was signed by the President, the DA and the BOC had argued that the reversion of the tariff rate on chicken MDM to the 2012 level of 40 percent is automatic.

The Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. (Pampi), however, said the reversion should not be automatic. Pampi President Felix O. Tiukinhoy Jr. also told the BUSINESSMIRROR that the government should refund any tariff difference collected by the BOC on imported chicken MDM.

Commitment

WITH the issuance of EO 82, local meat processors have committed not to hike the retail price of their products, particularly those that are popular with the poor.

"We will not increase our prices. We assure the consumers and the Department of Trade and Industry that we will not increase our prices now that [tariff on imported chicken MDM] is at 5 percent," Tiukinhoy said.

Neda Undersecretary for Planning and Policy Rosemarie G. Edillon told the BUSINESSMIRROR that the decision to retain the tariff rate at 5 percent was to reduce inflationary pressures.

Edillon said MDMs account for 22.5 percent to 27.4 percent and 26.3 percent to 35.3 percent of the cost to produce hot dogs and canned luncheon meat, respectively.

"MDM is the one that is primarily used in our processed products. [The government is] trying to contain the increase in prices of canned goods because these are usually consumed by the poor," Neda Assistant Secretary for Regional Development Mercedita A. Sombilla told the BUSINESSMIRROR.

Meat Importers and Traders Association (Mita) President Jesus C. Cham said traders would have preferred the permanent retention of the tariff to ensure that food prices will remain stable.

"It is a welcome, albeit, much-delayed order which will keep food inflation in check. But [the issuance of the EO] is a short-lived victory. That's not good for consumers," Cham said.

Edillon said the decision to extend the lower tariff rate on chicken MDM only until 2020 was also in consideration of rice prices.

"The government hopes that the price of other commodities will have stabilized by [2020], notably, rice. This means the tariff increase in MDM will not likely result in high inflation," she said.

After December 31, 2020, depending on the economic conditions at the time, the government may choose to gradually increase the tariff on MDM. This, Edillon said was the original recommendation of the Neda.

Food safety

UNITED Broiler Raisers Association (Ubra) President Elias Jose Inciong expressed disappointment over the government's decision to retain the 5-percent tariff on MDM.

Inciong also raised concerns over the food and health standards observed by meat processors in using MDM.

"The Food and Drug Administration [FDA] should look into the inclusion rate of MDM in accordance with health standards of the country of origin. How would consumers know that indeed it is affordable and it is of value to them?" he said.

Inciong noted that meat processors have admitted in previous Senate and Tariff Commission proceedings that the inclusion rate of MDM in their products is "high" at 35 percent. High MDM content could pose health risks to consumers, he said.

"The Economic Development cluster assured the profits of meat processors. But as far as consumers are concerned, [the government] does not have any grounds to assure that consumers will benefit [from high MDM use]," Inciong said.

However, Tiukinhoy dismissed Inciong's claim, saying he has no technical basis for declaring that high MDM use poses health risks. Also, the Pampi chief said processors keep utilization rate at safe levels.

"We will not do anything that is not good for our consumers. We do not exceed the healthy utilization rate of MDM. Besides, this [MDM] is where our consumers get their protein and calcium," Tiukinhoy said.

As unscrupulous traders misdeclare chicken leg quarters as MDM, the Ubra chief also urged the government to institutionalize measures that would curb technical smuggling of imported poultry. ***With a report from Cai U. Ordinario***

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Indonesia tells PHL: Reconsider trade measure on coffee imports

By Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas @jearcalas

JAKARTA is urging Manila to reconsider its special safeguard duty (SSG) on coffee imports as Indonesia is set to raise before a World Trade Organization (WTO) committee transparency concerns over the Philippines's imposition of the trade measure.

Indonesia has tabled a document for discussion for the upcoming WTO Committee on Agriculture (COA) meeting concerning the Philippines's imposition of SSG on imported instant coffee and other coffee extracts.

In a communication dated June 14, Indonesia disclosed that they did their own analysis to verify the accuracy of the trigger price notified by the Philippines to the WTO on the concerned imported coffee products.

Using "publicly available" Philippine data, Indonesia said it found out that the Philippines's notified trigger price "has far exceeded the correct average price of imports of instant coffee and extract coffee" as determined by pertinent WTO legal texts.

Under the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AOA), the trigger price SSG shall be determined by the average imported price of the commodity from 1986 to 1988.

Indonesia submitted the document to the WTO-COA "for the purpose of a discussion."

"Based on Article 18.7 of the WTO Agreement on Agriculture, Indonesia presents this information to other members in the interest of promoting transparency surrounding the Philippines's trigger price on instant coffee and extracts of coffee," the communication, a copy of which was obtained by the BusinessMirror, read.

In its analysis, Indonesia said the Philippines was unable to take into consideration the imported coffee products in the year 1988 in computing its trigger price.

Indonesia argued that publicly available Philippine import data showed that it imported instant coffee and coffee extracts in 1988 and not only in 1986 as claimed by the Philippines.

Due to this, Indonesia explained that the Philippines's trigger price for the concerned coffee products should averaged at P154.85 per kilogram and not P203.74 per kilogram, which is Manila's notified trigger price.

Data provided by Indonesia

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showed that the imported price of instant coffee and coffee extracts in 1986 was at P203.51 per kilogram, while in 1988 it was estimated at P106.10 per kilogram.

Indonesia disclosed that its exports of instant coffee and coffee extracts to the Philippines in 2018 has been "adversely affected" in due to the latter's imposition of the SSG.

Indonesia said "it urgently raises its findings and comments" on the Philippines's trigger price before the WTO-COA since it has "substantial interest in the application of SSG by the Philippines."

"In light of this important findings, the present Philippines's trigger price has far exceeded the correct trigger price and, in order to be consistent with the AOA, correction to the existing trigger price of instant coffee and extracts of coffee as per WTO notifications by the Philippines is required," Indonesia said.

"As one of main exporters of this product category, Indonesia expects that the Philippines will seriously consider our findings on this important matter," it added.

Nonetheless, Jakarta said "it looks forward to having a productive discussion on the correct determination of the Philippines's trigger price of instant coffee and extracts of coffee to ensure its consistency with the AOA."

The Philippines has explained in previous WTO-COA meetings that it did not import any instant coffee and coffee extracts from 1987 to 1988, hence, resulting in only one reference period for its trigger price which is 1986.

"There was neither any commercial importation in 1987 nor in 1998 of the concerned products; hence, the mathematical calculation for arriving at the trigger price of P203.74 for these products only covered the import and price data in 1986," the Philippines explained in the September 25th WTO-COA meeting last year.

Furthermore, the Philippines argued that it subjected the trigger price of instant coffee and coffee extracts "to the required public notices and public hearings/consultations" under relevant domestic laws "prior to its WTO notification and implementation of the SSG."

The country's instant coffee (HS Code 21011110) imports in 2018 fell by nearly 70 percent to 28,402.231 metric tons, from 93,696.938 MT in 2017, Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data showed.

PSA data showed that Indonesia accounted for 60.64 percent of the total imported instant coffee last year. But Jakarta's instant coffee shipments to the Philippines in 2018 declined by 68.47 percent to 17,225.675 MT, from 54,642.533 MT in 2017.

PSA data also showed that the country's importation of preparations with a basis of extracts, essences, or concentrates or with a basis of coffee (HS Code 21011200) in 2018 doubled to 213,729.286 MT, from 106,017.816 MT in 2017.

Indonesia was the top supplier of the coffee extract as it accounted for 80.93 percent of the total imports. Jakarta exported 172,978.890 MT of coffee extracts in 2018 versus the 100,474.32 MT recorded in 2017.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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Among the Philippine chocolate brands that impressed judges at the 2019 Academy of Chocolate Awards were Malagos, MS3 Choco and Theo and Philo Artisan Chocolates.

Pinoy brands harvest awards at 'choco Oscars'

By **PIA LEE-BRAGO**

Five Philippine chocolate brands received international recognition after bagging a total of 24 awards across various categories in the 2019 Academy of Chocolate Awards in the United Kingdom.

The chocolates of Auro Chocolate, Dalareich Food Products, Malagos Agri-Ventures Corp., MS3 Agri-Ventures and Theo and Philo Artisan Chocolates impressed more than 100

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Pinoy **From Page 1**

judges who made up the panel, according to the Philippine embassy in London.

This year's board of judges included leading chocolatiers and some of the UK's most prominent food writers and bloggers.

"The recognition given to Philippine chocolates over the years shows that Philippine chocolates are indeed world class," Ambassador Antonio Lagdameo said.

More than a thousand entries from close to 50 countries were marked for appearance, depth of aroma and flavor, length and complexity in a rigorous 25-session judging process over 12 weeks.

"Purity and sustainability of ingredients remain paramount considerations for the Academy," Marie-Pierre Moine, board member and awards ambassador, said.

Last year, Malagos chocolates of Davao City won five awards in the same competition.

Under the awards' drinking category, Malagos' 85-percent dark chocolate won silver while its 100-percent and 72-percent variants got bronze.

In the tree to bar category, its 72-percent and 85-percent variants won silver.

The Academy of Chocolate awards was launched in 2005.

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Rains to fill Angat Dam next month

By HELEN FLORES

Residents of Metro Manila and nearby areas must continue saving water as rains from the southwest monsoon that could normalize the supply in Angat Dam in Bulacan will not arrive until next month.

"We expect more rains come July and we expect the water level at Angat to gradually increase at that time," Esperanza Cayanan, chief of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA)'s weather division, said at a press conference.

Cayanan added that the occurrence of two to three tropical cyclones would also help Angat's water level rise back to its minimum operating level of 180 meters.

As of 6 a.m. yesterday, Angat dam's water level dipped further to 162.39 meters.

The dam supplies 97 percent of Metro Manila's water needs.

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) warned yesterday of possible reduction of the approved water allocation to Metro Manila at 46 cubic meter per second once the dam's water level dips below the low-level mark of 160 meters.

Cayanan said July, August and September are normally the wettest months of the year.

PAGASA administrator Vicente Malano said even with the prevailing weak El Niño, they still expect a normal number of tropical cyclones this year.

About 19 to 20 cyclones visit the country every year.

But Malano warned that tropical cyclones are usually intense during El Niño years.

The El Niño phenomenon, which triggered drought and dry spells in many areas in the past months, is likely to last up to November this year, according to PAGASA.

'New normal'

Malano said the country may also experience intense rains as heavy as that brought by Tropical Storm Ondoy (international name Ketsana) in September 2009.

Ondoy, which occurred during an El Niño year, dumped heavy rains for a day, which inundated Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

"The occurrence of intense rain is the new normal now because of global warming," Malano warned.

NWRB executive director Sevillo David assured the public that several measures will be undertaken to manage the remaining water, including the operationalization of the Angat Dam Low Level Outlet (LLO), the bottom channel capable of releasing water below 160 meters.

"We have started to subject to tests and rehabilitate this LLO since March. It showed that we have manageable water quality here," he added.

This LLO was last used in July 2010 when an El Niño condition was experienced in the country, where the lowest water level recorded was 163.09 meters.

Cloud-seeding operations will also be conducted as well as reactivating the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) deep wells, David said.

David also said a reduction of the 46 cubic meter per second allocation to MWSS may be made once the water level dips below 160 meters.

East zone concessionaire Manila Water Co. Inc. warned its consumers of interruptions in the next days.

"As Angat level goes down, release to the concessionaires is reduced and there will be impact on service rotation, but it does not mean that there will be no water totally," Manila Water president and CEO Ferdinand dela Cruz said at a briefing on Monday.

Manila Water assured its consumers that interruptions will be managed efficiently and will not be at peak hours.

Farmers' lament

Based on the latest report of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council, drought and dry spell damage to agriculture has reached P7.96 billion affecting 247,610 farmers.

As this developed, peasant groups urged government agencies and local government units to respond to the demands of farmers affected by El Niño's damage in agricultural production.

The groups including peasant women from Occidental Mindoro, Bicol and Eastern Visayas lamented the lack of government support.

"With very limited irrigation facilities, farmers are left with nothing but barren lands," said Zenaida Soriano, Amihan chair.

Samahang Magsasaka ng Kanlurang Mindoro and Samahang Kababaihang Magsasaka sa Mindoro noted the provincial government's declaration of state of calamity last April, with damage in agriculture reaching P275 million.

According to Samahan Gudti nga Parag-uma ha Sinirangan Bisayas, farmers have not yet recovered from the devastation of Super Typhoon Yolanda as they suffered crop infestation. – **With Rhodina Villanueva, Ramon Efren Lazaro, Louise Maureen Simeon**

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INCREASE YOUR BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

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EO retains 5% tariff on deboned poultry meat to keep prices low

PRESIDENT Rodrigo R. Duterte has signed an executive order retaining the 5% import tariff on mechanically deboned meat (MDM) from poultry until 2020 to mitigate the possible impact on prices.

The President signed on June 13 Executive Order no. 82: "Modifying the Nomenclature and Rates of Import Duty on Certain Agricultural Products Under Section 1611 of Republic Act No. 10863, Otherwise Known as the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act." The Palace released copies of the EO on Monday morning.

The EO states that the "present economic condition warrants the continued application of the reduced rate of duties on certain agricultural products to mitigate the impact of high prices of goods."

The issuance of the EO was on the recommendation of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Board, which backed the "maintenance of the tariff rates under EO No. 23 for mechanically deboned meat of chicken and turkey, and turkey meat and offal."

Meat processors have been awaiting the EO to reverse the recent imposition of a 40% MDM tariff at the borders, which is a return to the 2012 rate. The industry has been operating under the 5% rate for nearly a decade.

The 40% duty was the rate for MDM before the Philippines offered concessions in connection with a second extension on quantitative restrictions on rice imports.

Under the concession, the MDM of trading partners will enjoy entry into the country at a 5% tariff but will revert to the 2012 rate once a law lifting import limits on rice is in place.

The rice tariffication law took effect on March 5.

The EO was in response to the decision of the interagency Committee on Tariff and Related Matters which, on the request for an evaluation by meat processors, decided to retain the 5% tariff on MDM chicken, seeing no direct competition with the domestic poultry industry.

The Philippine Association of Meat Processors, Inc. (PAMPI) said in a statement emailed to reporters on Monday afternoon that the President's signing of the EO reflects his administration's "determined efforts to spur the growth of the local manufacturing industry."

The group added that Mr. Duterte's action "sends a strong signal to local and foreign investors that the investment climate in the Philippines is fair, attractive and competitive."

PAMPI Spokesperson Rex E. Agarrado told *BusinessWorld* via phone that this EO will have no impact on the price of poultry MDM.

"When [they] raised the duty from 5% to 40%, we did not raise our prices. Therefore, because we did not raise our prices from 5% to 40%, *sana* (I hope) you would understand (if prices do not move)... *kasi noong tinaas 'yon 'di nga kami nag*-adjust (because when the tariffs rose we did not adjust prices)..."

"I think what you should focus on is why the price of chicken and the price of pork today are so high?," he added. "'*Yun ang* question *eh* (that is the question)... *Alam mo ba ang* (do you know the price of) pork and chicken today? They are so high. Highest ever," he said.

He added: "Please don't expect us to drop prices because when you asked us to pay P400,000 per container, additional, we did not raise our prices, so *tama lang siguro na i*-stay *namin* (so it's only fair to hold prices steady)."

Also asked to comment, Meat Importers and Traders Association, Inc. (MITA) President Jesus C. Cham said in by phone: "It's a welcome albeit much delayed order which will help keep food inflation in check. However, we would have preferred that reduction be made permanent."

He also said, "Should the processors now petition TC (Tariff Commission) to maintain 5% duty for 2021-2025? Or should producers petition otherwise? I hear that NEDA will review next year (on a) trajectory to bring (the tariff) back to 40% gradually unless there are new petitions. So it is a short-lived victory for processors and consumers. That's not good."

"We still have an outstanding problem about the Bureau of Customs (BoC) collecting 35% retroactively from March 5 until June 13. We hope NEDA will grant our appeal for BoC not to do so," he continued. — **Arjay L. Balinbin *with* Vincent Mariel P. Galang**

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WESTERN VISAYAS: AKLAN

Kalibo Meat Plant due for rehabilitation

THE Philippine Slaughterhouse Management and Operation, Inc. (PSMO) and the Municipality of Kalibo are set to rehabilitate and renovate the Kalibo Meat Plant with the aim of having the facility attain double "AA" accreditation, which would ensure access to clean and secure products. "The project, which was undertaken as a joint venture under a public-private partnership scheme, uses the PPP Code of Aklan, as adopted by the Municipal Government of Kalibo and approved by its local Sanggunian, as its legal framework," the company said in a statement. The rehabilitation of the meat plant is expected to be completed within 12 months. PSMO is also tasked to improve the slaughterhouse. "The rehabilitation of the meat plant will also allow higher daily production capacity of the slaughterhouse," it said. — **Vincent Mariel P. Galang**

MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER
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Duterte retains 5 percent import duty on mechanically deboned poultry meat till 2020

By **GENALYN D. KABILING** and **MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR**

In a bid to cushion the impact of high prices of goods, President Duterte has decided to retain the 5 percent import tariff on mechanically deboned meat (MDM) of poultry until 2020.

The President has issued Executive Order (EO) No. 82 maintaining the reduced import duty on certain agricultural products upon the recommendation of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

"The present economic condition warrants the continued application of the reduced rate of duties on certain agricultural products to mitigate the impact of high prices of goods," the order read.

Under EO 82, the rate of import duty on mechanically deboned meat of chicken and turkey and turkey meat and offals will stay at 5 percent for 2019 and 2020. MDM is a raw material used to manufacture chicken hotdogs, chicken nuggets and other processed meat products.

"The NEDA Board recommends the maintenance of the tariff rates under EO No. 23 for mechanically deboned meat of chicken and turkey, and turkey meat and its offals," the ▶9

Duterte retains 5... ◀1

order read.

In 2017, the President reduced the tariff of chicken MDM to 5 percent as a concession to trade partners for letting the country extend the quota on rice imports to protect local farmers.

The reduced rates, contained in EO 23, are supposed to lapse on June 30, 2020 or until such time the rice trade liberalization takes effect, whichever comes first. Republic Act No. 11203 lifting rice import quotas and imposing tariffs was signed by the President last February.

Meat processors cheered the President's move. They earlier appealed to the government to retain the lower tariff rate on MDM to keep prices of canned goods and processed meat products affordable.

Local poultry growers, on the other hand, have reportedly asked the government to revert the tariffs on MDM imports to its 2012 level of 40 percent tariff as a protection to the industry.

"[This decision] reflects the government's determined efforts to spur the growth of the local manufacturing industry," Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. (PAMPI) said in a statement.

"The President's action sends a strong signal to local and foreign investors that the investment climate in the Philippines is fair, attractive and competitive," PAMPI further said.

PAMPI earlier argued that raising tariffs on imported raw materials for meat industry will result in increase in the price of meat products such as luncheon meat and sausages.

It was in 2012 when the government slashed the tariff on MDM to 5 percent as a concession to the country's trade partners for allowing Manila to extend its special treatment for rice.

The tariff rate would eventually revert back to 40 percent as stipulated in World Trade Organization (WTO) rules, but that wouldn't happen till January 1, 2021.

THE DAILY tribune
Without fear or favor

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Phl withdraws from major Chinese food fair

Last year, the Philippines paid for 150 booths at the CIIE but was unable to have all the requested booths because of stronger interest from other participating countries

Food companies under the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry will not be part of this year's China International Import Expo (CIIE), China's biggest food fair, as a result of its unfortunate experience last year.

This was learned from PCCI Chairman Emeritus Francis Chua who said he is no longer involved in this year's preparations for the annual event.

Chua, who spearheaded the Philippine delegation to the 2018 CIIE, said that after what happened last year, he cannot convince the members of Philippine Food Processors and Exporters Organization Inc. (Philfoodex) to join this year's big event.

"I am hands-off this year because I could not convince the group of Roberto Amores, President of Philfoodex, to join," he said, citing the group's difficult experience last year.

Last year, the Philippines paid for 150 booths at the CIIE but was unable to have all the requested booths because of stronger interest from other participating countries.

"We paid the money but we didn't receive what we paid for. That's why it was a big issue last year and you could not pinpoint who was at fault, whether it was us or them," Chua said.

Despite fully paying the $2,000 booth fee earlier in January, CIIE organizers insisted the Filipino delegates can only have shared booths due to the event's limited spaces.

Chua also said this time the CIIE allotted 900 square meters equivalent to 460 booths at $3,000 each but there were only six possible takers as "Filipinos have lost interest" in joining the fair.

Last year, Philippines food firms generated $124 million worth of sales from the expo.

CIIE, the first dedicated import exhibition in Shanghai, China where companies worldwide were given the platform to introduce themselves in the Chinese market, is slated to happen from 5 to 10 November this year.

Chua said that instead of joining the food fair, Philfoodex is keen on joining events targeted to boost the country's food sector with free participation fees like the Canton Fair.

Maria Romero

The Manila Times

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5% tariff on deboned meat retained

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte signed an executive order (EO) retaining the 5-percent tariff on mechanically deboned (MDM) or separated meat to counter higher prices of certain meat-based foods.

Duterte signed EO 82 on June 13, copies of which were given to members of the media four days after.

The measure also retained the 20-percent tariff of frozen poultry.

Duterte said it would only be right to retain the lower tariffs given "the present economic condition."

"The present economic condition warrants the continued application of the reduced rate of duties on certain agricultural products to mitigate the impact of high prices of goods," the measure read.

MDM is used in certain meat or meat products such as hot dogs, certain sausages, patties and nuggets.

The retention of tariffs was recommended by the National Economic Development Authority Board.

The order extends EO 23, which extended the temporary reduced rate of duty on certain agricultural products, under Republic Act 10863 or the "Customs Modernization and Tariff Act."

Originally, EO 23 reduced the rates of agricultural products, including MDM of chicken and turkey, as well as turkey meat and its offals, until June 30, 2020.

The new EO will be applicable until Dec. 31, 2020.

The higher tariffs of other meat and edible offal will still be enforced.

The order was signed a few days after the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas reported a 3.2-percent inflation rate in May, marginally higher than the 3 percent in April.

Malacañang had said the rise in the cost of buying of the goods was not a cause for concern.

The order will take effect immediately after it was published in the *Official Gazette* or in a newspaper of general circulation.

RALPH U. VILLANUEVA

The Manila Times

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Weather bureau sees stronger typhoons

THE Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) expects the country to have more violent typhoons because of the persisting El Niño in the Northern hemisphere.

"The ongoing El Niño will persist until summer of this year with high probability, and even during the winter season of the Northern hemisphere," Pagasa Deputy Administrator for Research and Development Flaviana Hilario said in a press conference on Monday.

Hilario said El Niño would likely continue until November.

Pagasa Administrator Vicente Malano said the weather bureau expects stronger rains, which is prevalent during an El Niño event.

"Kung nand'yan na ang bagyo, during an El Niño, *mataas ang init ng panahon na 'yan, ang kanyang* tendency is *malakas din ang* evaporation *dahil 'yun 'yung pangangailangan ng bagyo.* So, *maraming ibubuhos na ulan* during an El Niño event (The warm weather during an El Niño event has the tendency to cause strong evaporation during a typhoon. So, heavy rains are expected during an El Niño event)," Malano said.

Pagasa also expects the same number of typhoons to make landfall this year.

"Hindi natin inaasahan na ku-mukonti 'yung number ng tropical cyclone *na pwedeng tumama dito* sa atin *(We do not expect the number* of typhoons to be reduced)," he said.

Pagasa Weather Services Chief Esperanza Cayanan said although there was a possibility of typhoons changing tracks, the southwest monsoon might bring heavy rains. Pagasa expects one typhoon by the end of June.

DIVINA NOVA JOY DELA CRUZ

PEOPLES JOURNAL Tonight
http://www.journal.com.ph

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PRRD keeps low tariff on selected poultry products

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has retained the low tariff on selected poultry products in an Executive Order (EO) which he signed on June 13, 2019.

EO 82 maintains the five percent tariff on mechanically deboned meat (MDM) of chicken and turkey and turkey offals. It amends EO No. 23 signed by the President in 2017, wherein concessionary rates on certain agricultural products should go back to the 2012 levels once the quantitative restriction (QR) on rice is removed and converted into ordinary customs duties.

Duterte issued the order following recommendation of the National Economic and Development Board to maintain the tariff rates under EO 23.

"The present economic condition warrants the continued application of the reduced rate of duties on certain agricultural products to mitigate the impact of high prices of goods," the order stated.

The tariff rates, which were supposed to expire on June 30, 2020, are now in effect until December 31, 2020.

The Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (Republic Act 10863) allows the President to "increase, reduce, or remove existing rates of import duty including any necessary change in classification" when Congress is not in session.

Efren Montano

ABANTE
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5% taripa sa manok, turkey nilagdaan ni Duterte

NAGPALABAS ng executive order si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte hinggil sa pagpapanatili ng 5-porsiyentong taripa sa mechanically deboned meat (MDM) ng poultry.

Ang nasabing EO no. 82 ay nilagdaan ng Pangulo noong Hunyo 13 kung saan bukod sa mababang tariff rate ng MDM ng mga manok ay kabilang din dito ang karne ng turkey.

"The present economic condition warrants the continued application of the reduced rate of duties on certain agricultural products to mitigate the impact of high prices of goods," saad ng Pangulo.

Magugunitang noong nakaraang taon ay hinirit din ng Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. na i-maintain ang 5% tariff sa MDM upang matiyak na affordable sa mga mamimili ang mga canned goods at processed meat product.

(Prince Golez)

Remate
ANG DIARYO NG MASA

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EDITORYAL

TAG-ULAN, TAG-BAGYO NA

NGAYONG araw ang pasimula ng tag-ulan at tag-bagyo, ayon sa Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

Ibig sabihin nito, makararanas tayo ng siyam-siyam na ulan, 2-3 bagyo kada buwan hanggang Disyembre at mga bunga ng mga ito na baha, landslide at iba pa.

Magbubunga rin ang mga ito ng kamatayan na kung minsa'y maramihan, pagkasira ng marami at mahahalagang ari-arian, malaking problema sa trapik sa tao at serbisyo at iba pa.

Sa kabuuan, mapanira ang mga tag-ulan at tag-bagyo kaya naman dapat nang maghanda ang lahat para kung hindi man mapigilan ang paninira ng mga ito ng buhay at ari-arian, mabawasan man lang ito.

Maganda ang paghahanda kung may mahigpit na samahan ng pamahalaan, mamamayan at iba pa para magtulong-tulong sa oras ng pangangailangan.

Sa mga oras ng storm surge, tsunami at landslide lamang, napakarami ang namamatay at nasisiraan ng ari-arian.

At alam naman ng lahat na may permanenteng perwisyong nagaganap gaya ng pagkamatay ng tao at ganap na paglikas mula sa mga danger zone at ipinagbabawal ng pamahalaan.

Mga tao, pinansya, gamit, koordinasyon, kooperasyon at pagiging boluntaryo at masakripisyo, nasaan ang mga ito bilang bahagi ng laban sa mga masasamang kalagayang dulot ng tag-ulan at tag-bagyo?

Sa kabilang banda, may bunga ring magaganda ang tag-ulan at tag-bagyo gaya ng pagtubo at paglago ng mga halaman, kasama ang mga palay; paglinis ng mga kapaligiran, kasama ang hangin; pagiging maganda ng mga isda at iba pang yamang-dagat at marami pang iba.

Pagkakataon na pasiglahin ang lahat ng magagandang bagay sa tag-ulan.

PILIPINO MIRROR
FILIPINO MIRROR MEDIA GROUP CORPORATION
• SALAMIN NG KATOTOHANAN •

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NILAGDAAN ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang isang executive order na nagpapanatili sa mababang taripa sa ilang poultry products tulad ng mechanically deboned chicken at turkey meat upang mapabagal ang inflation.

SUNDAN SA PAHINA 8

Pinanatili ni Duterte

LOW TARIFF SA POULTRY PRODUCTS

Mula sa pahina 1

Sa ilalim ng Executive Order 82 na nilagdaan ni Duterte noong Hunyo 13, ang taripa sa mechanically deboned o separated meat ay mananatili sa 5 percent at sa frozen poultry sa 20 percent.

Ipinalabas ni Duterte ang kautusan kasunod ng rekomendasyon ng National Economic and Development Board na panatilihin ang tariff rates sa ilalim ng EO 23 na inisyu noong 2017 para sa MDM chicken at turkey meat, at turkey offals.

"The present economic condition warrants the continued application of the reduced rate of duties on certain agricultural products to mitigate the impact of high prices of goods," nakasaad sa kautusan.

Ang tariff rates, na nakatakda sanang mapaso sa Hunyo 30, 2020, ay epektibo na hanggang Disyembre 31, 2020.

Ang Customs Modernization and Tariff Act (Republic Act 10863) ay nagpapahintulot sa Pangulo na "taasan, bawasan, o alisin ang umiiral na rates sa import duty, kabilang ang kinakailangang pagbabago sa klasipikasyon" kapag walang session ang Kongreso.

Nauna rito ay nanawagan ang Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. (PAMPI) sa pamahalaan na panatilihing mababa ang tariff rates sa MDM, isang mahalagang material, upang maiwasan ang pagtaas sa presyo ng processed meat products tulad ng hotdogs.

Ang inflation ay bahagyang bumilis sa 3.2 percent noong Mayo makaraang maitala ang 16-month low na 3 percent noong Abril. Gayunman ay pasok pa rin ito sa pagtaya ng Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) na 2.8 hanggang 3.6 percent para sa nasabing buwan.

PILIPINO MIRROR
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MGA PAGKAING PINOY SA TAIPEI INTERNATIONAL FOOD SHOW

MATAPOS ang tagumpay na resulta ng IFEX Philippines NXTFOOD ASIA noong nakaraang buwan, nakatutok naman ngayon ang Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM) sa Taipei International Food Show (TIFS) ngayong Hunyo 19-22 2019 sa Taipei Nangang Exhibition Center and The Taipei World Trade Center (TWTC).

Bilang export promotion arm ng Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) pamamahalaan ng CITEM ang delegasyon ng Filipinas ngayong taon ng TIFS. Ang Philippine Pavilion ay ilalagay sa ground floor ng TWTC Hall 1.

Mas kilala sa tawag na FOOD TAIPEI, ang TIFS ngayong taon ay gaganapin nang sabay sa apat na food-related shows (Foodtech & Pharmatech Taipei, Taipei Pack, Taiwan HORECA at Halal Taiwan). Ang 5-in-1 food show ay magbibigay sa mga bisita at exhibitors ng isang one-stop shop na makikipag-ugnayan sa mga kompanya, brands at suppliers mula sa lahat ng facets at related sectors ng industriya ng pagkain.

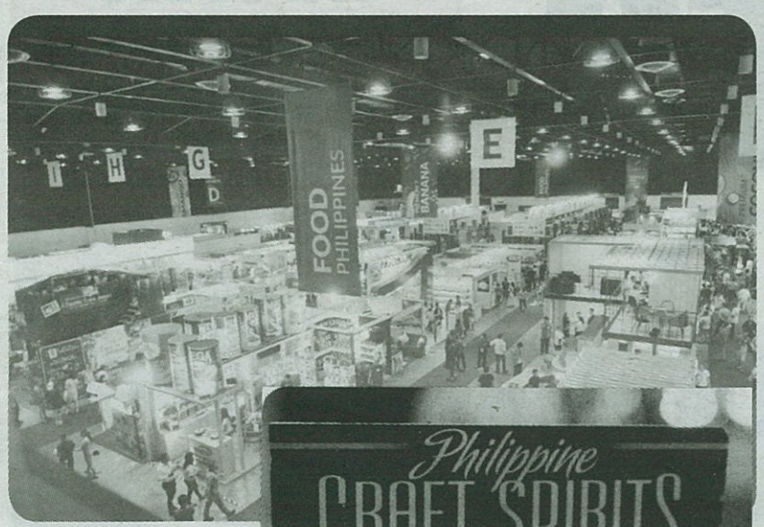
Para sa edisyon, magdadala ang delegasyon ng Filipinas ng pabalik at first-time exhibitors sa Taiwan na pag-iisahin sa ilalim ng tema na Food Philippines. Layon ng tema ngayon na ipakilala ang natural at malusog na mga produkto ng pagkain ng Filipinas habang inilalagay ang special focus sa premium tropical fruits ng bansa tulad ng saging, mangga, pinya, calamansi, coconut products gaya ng VCO, coco water, coco powder, desiccated coconut, natural na sarsa at panghalo at ready-to-eat processed foods & beverages.

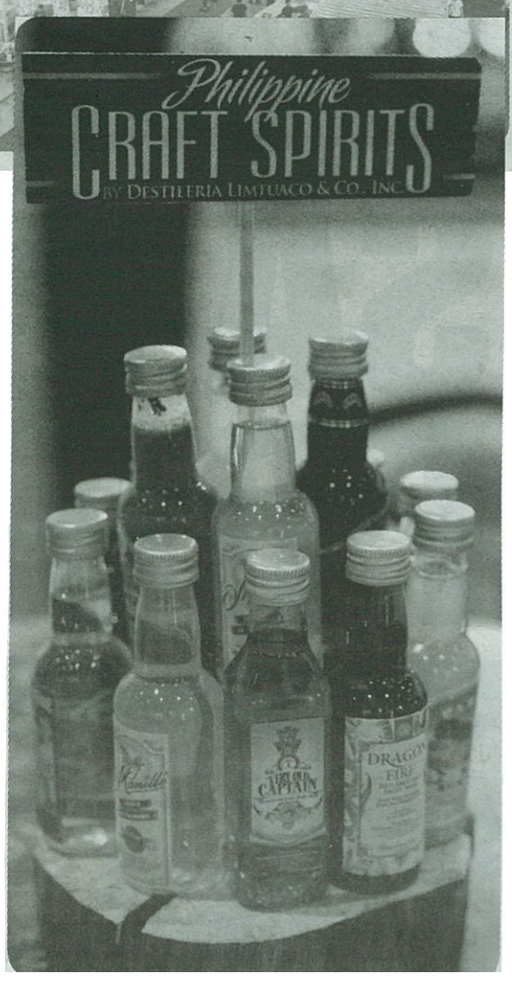
Ang ilang bumabalik na kompanya sa FOOD TAIPEI ngayong taon ay ang Destileria Limtuaco, Year Luck, at Century Pacific Food. Sasali sa kanila ang mga baguhang TIFS tulad ng GAINCO-CO, Leonie Agri Corp. at JND Manufacturing Industries.

Karamihan sa exhibitors na pupunta sa Taiwan na may layon na itaas ang kanilang kaalaman sa brand, magtaguyod ng kanilang bagong product lines at diskubrehin ang merkado ng Taiwan sa pag-asang makakuha ng foreign clients hindi lamang sa Taiwan, kundi maging sa mainland China.

Sa partisipasyon ng Filipinas nang nagdaang taon sa FOOD TAIPEI, nagkaroon ng kita na US$25.83 milyon sa benta ng 18 participants. Para sa 2019 edition, plano ng DTI-CITEM na umabot sa sales target na US$26 million kasabay ng dagdag sa bilang ng business inquiries. At sa bilang ng health-conscious consumers na lalo pang dumarami, siguradong makagagawa ang Food-Philippines ng impact sa international at Taiwanese buyers sa naturang food show.

Makikita ang Philippine exhibitors at marami pang iba sa Taipei International Food Show ngayong Hunyo 19-22, 2019 sa Taipei World Trade Center Hall 1 at sumali sa iba't ibang food samplings at buyer services, at magexplore ng iba pang food-related shows na gaganapin sa lugar ng pagdarausan ng okasyon. Para sa higit pang impormasyon, bisitahin ang www.citem.com.ph/food-taipei.





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Corn hits highest since 2014

SINGAPORE- Chicago corn futures climbed more than 2 percent on Monday to a five-year top as more rains and flooding in parts of the US Midwest are likely to curb output in the world's biggest producer of the grain.

Wheat rose to a nine-and-a-half-month peak while soybeans advanced more than 1 percent, gaining for a sixth consecutive session.

The most-active corn contract on the Chicago Board of Trade was up 2.3 percent at $4.63-1/4 a bushel, near the session high of $4.64 a bushel - the highest since June 2014.

"The market is finding new 'horror stories' about US corn crops as it scours the US Midwest for information," said Tobin Gorey, director of agricultural strategy, Commonwealth Bank of Australia.

The storms have left millions of acres unseeded in the $51 billion US corn market and put crops that were planted late at a greater risk for damage from severe weather during the growing season.

Together, the problems heap more pain on a farm sector that has suffered from years of low crop prices and a US-China trade war that is slowing agricultural exports. **–*Reuters***