

**CLIPPINGS FOR FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, 2023**

**A. SEC. PBBM QUOTED**

**BUSINESS WORLD**

Irrigation deputy named

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

'Retail prices of rice can surpass 1998 crisis level'

**MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT**

PH, Zimbabwe to boost cooperation in agriculture, education sectors

**MANILA BULLETIN**

PH vows to help develop Zimbabwe

**B. DA FAMILY**

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

NFA warehouse tapped for distribution of smuggled sugar

Editorial: Food inflation

DA: 4000 MT of white onions arriving next week

500 kilos of 'hot' meat seized

**BUSINESS WORLD**

Agri modernization, education reform seen as next drivers of growth in jobs

**MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT**

DA lifts poultry import ban

**PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

How to replicate the sweet success of PH cacao

**THE MANILA TIMES**

BIMP-EAGA to boost supply chains, says DA

Inflation scourge

**MANILA BULLETIN**

Onion price surges to P170 per kilo as hoarders are active again – Romualdez

**PILIPINO STAR NGAYON**

Karne ng baboy galing Bohol, bawal sa Cebu

**PEOPLE'S JOURNAL**

Shift to climate resilient agri, fisheries pushed

**C. AGRI-RELATED STORY**

**BUSINESS MIRROR**

DTI and BARMM's MTIT ink pact for halal industry devt

**THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

P50 and bananas

**MANILA BULLETIN**

Farmer who makes mushroom products shares tips on...

**ABANTE TONITE**

Pananim sa Ilocos napeste ng kuhol

**D. FOREIGN STORY**

**MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT**

Soybeans, corn firm



**LIBRARY**  
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

## BRIEFS

### Irrigation deputy named

BAGUIO CITY — President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. has appointed former National Tobacco Administrator (NTA) Robert Victor Seares, Jr. as deputy administrator of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA).

Mr. Seares Jr. took his oath before Executive Secretary Lucas P. Bersamin at the presidential palace in Manila on Aug. 9.

He was ex-President Rodrigo R. Duterte's administrator at the NTA at the age of 40, the youngest ever appointed to the position, after his father, former NTA Administrator Robert Lizardo Seares Sr. died. — **Artemio A. Dumlao**



Date: August 11, 2023 Page: 185

## **'Retail prices of rice can surpass 1998 crisis level'**

The present high retail prices of rice are comparable to the 1998 rice crisis and can even surpass that level amid the continued spike in prices of the grains, Federation of Free Farmers (FFF) national manager Raul Montemayor said yesterday.

Montemayor earlier also warned of a repeat of the rice crisis in 2018 during 2018, the highest retail price of regular milled rice was P46.19 per kilo and

*NFA warehouses tapped to store smuggled sugar. Story on Page 2.*

the Duterte administration. well-milled rice was P49.44 per kilo. "During the rice crisis in October We are now at that level and the peak

harvest season will still be in October," Montemayor said in an interview with **The STAR**.

While it is understandable that the government does not want to create panic, unless necessary actions are  
**Turn to Page 5**

### **Retail** From Page 1

will affect **President Marcos**," he added.

Montemayor noted that even if there is still supply of rice in the market, the price spike in the last few weeks already reached P7 per kilo.

He said there was an abrupt increase in the farmgate price of palay. From P23, it became P30, then P34 and now traders are procuring at P37 per kilo, which means that rice millers are willing to pay higher farmgate prices as they take advantage of the lean months.

"If the farmgate price of palay is P34 per kilo, the retail price of rice will range between P65 and P70 per kilo for premium grade. The retail price of regular milled rice is going up because a spike in the premium grade is influencing it," he noted.

Montemayor said that National Food Authority Administrator Robert Bioco also wrote a confidential memorandum to Marcos in April regarding a possible shortage of rice.

"We (Montemayor and Bioco) have the same forecast. The DA does not want to admit that there is a problem, as it will prove that they failed with their programs. That's my reading but they need to face the problem head on and tell the truth. If the problem (in the rice supply and prices) will persist in September, they will be faulted," he said.

The FFF official recalled that when the rice crisis hit in 2018, the government al-

lowed immediate importation.

"When the importation was made, the retail prices of rice immediately went down. This time, the private sector does not want to import while the government is barred from importing so we are in a difficult situation," Montemayor added.

According to Montemayor, there is also a possibility that the country will have a shortage in water for irrigation amid the threat of the El Niño phenomenon.

He said that while the importers committed at least 300,000 metric tons of rice, a deficit is still expected, as the country needs at least 700,000 metric tons in September.

Montemayor said that officials of the DA may not be giving the actual data to the President after he gave assurance on the country's rice supply.

"Officials should issue statements without connecting it to possible shortages like stop wasting rice, and eat alternative food like sweet potato. There are no messages to conserve rice. Their message was only 'don't worry, we have enough stocks,'" he said.

Montemayor said that as early as April 2023, he stressed the need to import at least two million metric tons (MT) of rice by June 2023 to ensure 60 days of rice inventory.

"As of July, the total imports only reached 1.9 million MT and by August 1, the inventory was only 39 days," he noted.

Montemayor warned that hunger will further go up amid the spike in retail prices of rice.  
- **Bella Cariaso**



## PH, Zimbabwe to boost cooperation in agriculture, education sectors

BY JOCELYN MONTEMAYOR

ZIMBABWE and the Philippines yesterday vowed to enhance cooperation in agriculture and education, among other sectors.

The Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said President Marcos Jr. underscored the importance of forging an agreement with the government of Zimbabwe to institutionalize efforts to boost the agricultural and education sectors of the two countries.

The President welcomed Zimbabwean non-resident ambassador-designate to the Philippines Constance Chemwayi during her presentation of credentials in Malacañang.

Chemwayi will be based in Malaysia.

The envoy said she is looking forward to a lot that Zimbabwe can learn from the Philippines, especially in terms of boosting the economy and making food sufficient.

She said that like the Philippines, Zimbabwe is putting priority on strengthening the agricultural and infrastructure sectors in a bid to become a middle-income country by 2030.

She said her country is pushing for the creation of more agricultural universities.

Chemwayi also expressed interest in learning from the Philippines' experience in mobilizing its citizens, especially those residing abroad.

"We found inspiration from the way your country assists citizens in the diaspora to make meaningful contributions to the economy of their country," she said.

Marcos said the Philippines is more than willing to help Zimbabwe, and it has "very well-developed research and development and schools that have been actually the premier schools for agriculturists and agronomists

See PH > Page B3

### PH

here in Asia."

"Like you, we are prioritizing agriculture. And in fact, it is both the supply and the price of agricultural commodities. And with that, we talk not only about products, but even the inputs such as fertilizer. I think we are all undergoing

that," Marcos said.

The Philippines and Zimbabwe commemorated the 43rd anniversary of diplomatic relations formally established on April 18, 1980.

Apart from Chemwayi, the President also received Vietnamese Ambassador Hoang Huy Chung who made a farewell call in Malacañang yesterday.

Marcos expressed his gratitude to the Vietnamese envoy for bringing diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Vietnam closer, and for making progress in various diplomatic areas, particularly in trade.



LIBRARY  
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

## PH vows to help develop Zimbabwe agriculture

By RAYMUND ANTONIO

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. on Thursday, August 10, expressed the Philippines' willingness to help Zimbabwe develop its agricultural sector to make it more food sufficient.

Marcos made the pledge during the presentation of credentials by Zimbabwean non-resident Ambassador-designate to the Philippines Constance Chemwayi in Malacañang.

She told the President that she was looking forward to Zimbabwe learning how to boost the economy as her country is prioritizing enhancing their agricultural and infrastructure sector with the aim of becoming a middle-income country by 2030.

"Like you, we are prioritizing agriculture. And in fact, it is both the supply and the price of agricultural commodities. And with that, we talk not only about products, but even the inputs such as fertilizer. I think we are all undergoing that," the Chief Executive said.

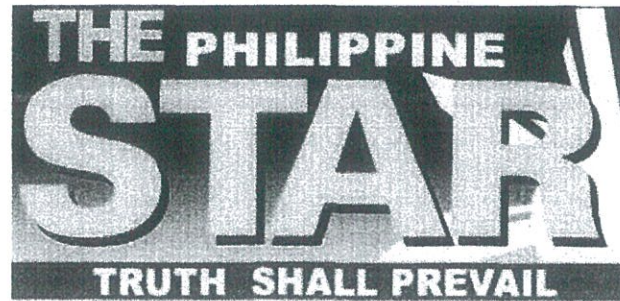
"So, I hope that we can find a way. We happen to have a very well-developed research and development and schools that have been actually the premier schools for agriculturists and agronomists here in Asia," he added.

The ambassador-designate shared that Zimbabwe is also pushing for the creation of more agricultural universities as Marcos underscored the importance of forging an agreement with Zimbabwe to rationalize and institutionalize efforts to boost the agricultural and education sectors of both countries.

Despite Chemwayi being stationed in Malaysia, the Chief Executive said he was looking forward to her future visits as the two countries work to expand and enhance their bilateral relations.



LIBRARY  
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE



Date: August 11, 2023 Page: 2

## NFA warehouses tapped for distribution of smuggled sugar

By BELLA CARIASO

The Department of Agriculture (DA) will tap the warehouses of the National Food Authority (NFA) in the distribution of the 4,000 metric tons or 80,000 bags of smuggled sugar in Kadiwa stores nationwide.

Rex Estoperez, DA assistant secretary and deputy spokesperson, said in an interview that a memorandum of agreement was already signed

by both agencies, noting that the NFA has warehousing and logistics capabilities as well as branches nationwide.

The DA and Bureau of Customs have signed a separate MOA for the formal turnover of 4,000 MT of smuggled sugar to the agency.

Estoperez said the smuggled sugar would be withdrawn from the ship and brought to warehouses.

"These (smuggled sugar) have to

be subjected also to (random) testing of the Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) before it could be made public," he added.

According to Estoperez, the NFA will also be in charge of repacking these to one-kilo and two-kilo bags. "The NFA can do that (repacking). We will pay the NFA what's due them for the operational cost."

The NFA, he said, targets to release the sugar "as soon as possible"

with Visayas and Mindanao each getting 20 percent of the allocation and Luzon, especially Metro Manila where the consumption is higher, getting the rest.

He said that the DA is eyeing to sell the confiscated sweeteners at Kadiwa stores at P70 per kilo. Based on DA monitoring, the retail price of brown sugar ranged between P78 and P90 per kilo; washed sugar, P82 and P95 per

kilo; and refined sugar, P86 and P110 per kilo.

"While the smuggled sugar was given to the DA at no cost to the government, we have to consider also the price of our local sugar as it will destroy the market, it will disrupt the prices of our locally produced," Estoperez noted.

The proceeds from the sale will go to the trust fund for the expansion of Kadiwa outlets, he said.



## EDITORIAL

### Food inflation

At around this time last year, agriculture producers were already reminding the government that orders must be placed for the importation of white onions, since domestic output usually runs out in the third quarter, and a shortage could put pressure on the supply and consequently the price of red onions.

The reminder was brushed aside, amid shrill warnings about public officials out to make money from agricultural importations. Sure enough, the onion shortage started. By the time the holiday season rolled around, red onion prices had shot up to an eye-watering P700 to P750 a kilo, there was no white onion to be had, and memes abounded about onions becoming more precious than gold.

This time, with domestic white onion production again slowing down and existing stocks good only for about a month, and red onion prices again rising in the market, the Department of Agriculture has announced that at least 4,000 metric tons of imported white onions are expected to arrive within a week.

While waiting for the imports to arrive and retail prices to soften, the public is also waiting for authorities to file charges related to agricultural smuggling and hoarding against several persons identified as members of an

onion cartel. The names are not new, but no one has faced criminal indictment so far, especially for what probers say is an offense that constitutes economic sabotage.

People are also waiting for the prices of another basic food commodity, sugar, to come down from the stratosphere. This does not refer to prices in the heavily subsidized Kadiwa outlets, where smuggled sugar confiscated by the government will reportedly be made available, and where the government also sells rice at a loss for P25 a kilo.

At regular outlets, sugar prices have amazingly refused to soften despite the arrival of hundreds of thousands of metric tons of imported sugar since the fourth quarter of 2022. This indicates cartelized supply and price manipulation, according to certain quarters in the sugar industry, but so far, it doesn't look like anyone is going to be held accountable for the illegal activities. Institutional users and micro entrepreneurs alike have suffered from the high prices of sugar.

Inflation slowed down for a fifth straight month last June, but food inflation continued to be the biggest driver. And confectionery and sweetened beverages still accounted for a hefty chunk of food inflation. The inflation figures could worsen if the onion crisis is repeated.

Date: August 11, 2023 Page: 184



LIBRARY  
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

## **DA: 4,000 MT of white onions arriving next week**

By **BELLA CARIASO**

With present stocks seen to last only a month, at least 4,000 metric tons of white onions are expected to arrive in the country next week, according to officials of the **Department of Agriculture (DA)** and Bureau of Plant Industry.

BPI Director Gerald Glenn Panganiban yesterday said the imported white onions would arrive in the next seven days.

In a separate interview, Agriculture Assistant Secretary and deputy spokesman Rex Estoperez said there is no need for President

**Turn to Page 4**

## **DA** From Page 1

Marcos or Agriculture Senior Undersecretary Domingo Panganiban to issue a special order for the importation of onions.

Estoperez said the BPI should only issue sanitary and phytosanitary import clearance to importers who intend to procure the bulbs.

Based on the inventory of the BPI, the country's stock for white onions would only last for 30 days.

Stocks of red onions in cold storage facilities are estimated to reach 100 days.

"We are doing this (importation) to sustain the current retail prices and prevent prices from spiking again," Estoperez said, referring to the situation in December wherein the retail prices of onions reached as high as P720 per kilo.

He said the DA was able to maintain the retail prices of onions at below P200 per kilo after the harvest in April. Retail prices of local red onions ranged between P140 and P190 per kilo; local white onions between P110 and P170 and imported white onions between P110 and P160 per kilo. Estoperez urged traders to stop hoarding red onions to

prevent artificial shortage.

"If the red onions will not be released from cold storages, that will be to their (traders) disadvantage. They should not force us to import red onions as it is detrimental to them. We are appealing to traders to cooperate with the government," Estoperez added. He said the DA has learned from the spike of retail prices on onions.

"We will not allow that (P720 per kilo of onions) to happen as last time they promised to release the inventory, but it did not happen and cause a delay in the importation," Estoperez said.

He said the importation of white onions is needed due to high demand from restaurants and institutional buyers. The retail price of onions will be maintained until the next harvest next year, he said.

"We want it (current price) to be sustained or even lower, depending on the harvest of farmers if they have a bumper harvest," he said.

Estoperez said the six-month preventive suspension against Agriculture Assistant Secretary Kristine Evangelista and other officials showed the need to abide by the rules and regulations to prevent a similar situation from happening.

Date: August 11, 2023 Page: 12



**LIBRARY**  
**DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE**

## 500 kilos of 'hot' meat seized

At least 500 kilos of mishandled meat were confiscated from five establishments in Parañaque City on Thursday, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Dennis Solomon of the DA Inspectorate and Enforcement group led the operation.

Solomon said most of the confiscated "hot" meat came from China, including Peking duck, black chicken and other pork products.

The DA has banned the importation of meat from China amid the outbreak of African swine fever there.

According to Solomon, the DA also seized meat products after vendors failed to present necessary permits from the National Meat Inspection Service.

— Bella Carias, Daphe Galvez



## Agri modernization, education reform seen as next drivers of growth in jobs

By John Victor D. Ordoñez *Reporter*

AGRICULTURE modernization and updating the education system need to be the next steps after the government's decision to tout infrastructure as the driver of employment, labor groups said.

"We advocate for a comprehensive approach to national development that extends beyond infrastructure projects," Jose G. Matula, president of the Federation of Free Workers (FFW), said in a Viber message.

"In addition to infrastructure, the FFW calls for a renewed emphasis on agri-industrialization, recognizing the potential of agriculture to drive economic advancement and create employment opportunities in rural areas."

Public Works Secretary Manuel M. Bonoan said on Tuesday that the labor requirement for major infrastructure projects will exceed three million workers.

He said earlier that the projects will include farm-to-market roads undertaken alongside the Department of Agriculture, which are valued at about P890 billion.

Labor Secretary Bienvenido E. Laguesma said his department will collaborate with the DPWH to hire skilled and unskilled workers for the 70,000 ongoing major and minor infrastructure projects this year.

Mr. Matula said partnerships with the education industry are crucial to equip the workforce for the modern workplace.

On Tuesday, Mr. Laguesma presented his department's labor and employment plan to the Cabinet. The plan called for greater coordination with other agencies to create sustainable jobs and ensure social protections for workers.

"Major infrastructure projects of the government would surely make a dent in the country's job generation for a certain period of time," Renato B. Magtubo, chairman of Partido Manggagawa, said in a Viber message.

He said that the DPWH should provide DoLE and other agencies with complete details of the infrastructure projects it was working on, to develop specialized, comprehensive upskilling programs.

"We want the private sector to be part of our plan to create more jobs with important government agencies," Mr. Laguesma said at a Palace briefing on Tuesday. "We want them to see the manpower requirement to complete these projects."

The jobless rate rose to a three-month high of 4.3% in June, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported on Wednesday.



LIBRARY  
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

FOR THREE COUNTRIES

## DA lifts poultry import ban

BY JED MACAPAGAL

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) has lifted the temporary ban of poultry products from Hungary, Japan and Czech Republic.

Under memorandum orders 52, 53 and 54 series of 2023 signed

by senior undersecretary Domingo Panganiban, the move was made after the countries provided evidence of contained bird flu incidence.

The issuances specifically allowed the importation of domestic and wild birds and their products

including poultry meat, day old chicks, eggs and semen originating from Hungary, Japan and Czech Republic but must still comply with existing importation rules of the DA.

Based on data from the Bureau of Animal Industry, as of the first half

of the year, there were no poultry meat shipments from the three countries to the Philippines thus far.

DA's monitoring of public markets as of yesterday showed the prevailing retail price of whole dressed chicken ranges between P160 to P210 per kg.



## How to replicate the sweet success of PH cacao

To promote private sector leadership needed in agriculture transformation, we must identify models to replicate for other key agriculture commodities. One successful model was already done in the cacao industry.

Last July 14, Department of Trade and Industry Undersecretary Blesila Lantayona described the Philippine Cacao Industry Association (PCIA) as the private sector arm of the public-private Philippine Cacao Industry Council (PCIC). The PCIA members have been actively working with the PCIC in the implementation of its projects, activities and programs.

### Background

During a previous administration, the Department of Agriculture (DA) identified cacao as one of its key high-value crops. However, there was no unity among the private sector stakeholders. Consequently, in August 2015, the PCIC was formed alongside 16 Regional Cacao Industry

### COMMENTARY

ERNESTO M. ORDOÑEZ

Councils. The PCIC is composed of public and private sector representatives. It is chaired by an elected private sector representative and cochaired by an official of the DA, which is the lead government agency. The completely private sector PCIA also supports the PCIC at the regional levels.

Here are seven key PCIA achievements over the last two years:

**1. Annual Cacao Congress:** Funded mostly by the private sector, it covers topics such as global markets and soil suitability. This year's Congress will focus on productivity and promote steps for the Philippines to have the best chocolate in the whole world.

**2. Monthly "Usapang Kakao at Tsokolate":** For the past two

years, attendance has reached 2,787 industry participants. There have been 5,398 monthly Facebook live engagements, with further reach of 19,973. This monthly internet-aided meeting provides easy accessibility to the latest technologies and issues.

**3. Soil suitability climate change maps:** PCIA has identified suitable cacao areas that consider both soil suitability and climate change conditions. The move has modified campaigns which haphazardly promote cacao in inappropriate areas.

**4. Harmonized production and postharvest technical publication:** The PCIA has gathered the best experts in cacao production and processing. They then published a harmonized technical guidebook on best practices used nationwide.

**5. Quality awards:** The PCIA institutionalized (and sponsors) the annual Philippine Cacao Quality Awards. As a result, the Philippines has won gold and silver awards in the most pres-

tigious chocolate award competitions in the world.

**6. Training:** A memorandum of agreement has been signed between PCIA and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority, in collaboration with the DA, Agriculture Training Institute and PCIC for training programs for cacao farmers and processors. Training modules and model farms have also been developed.

**7. Marketing:** PCIA assists in marketing cacao products. Coordination is done with producers, processors and market outlets.

### Emphasis

The PCIA emphasizes two points. First, our average 700-milligram yield must be increased to two kilos per plant to ensure farmer profitability and sustainability. Second, while we have won gold medals in worldwide competitions, still very few have achieved this level. More individuals must be empowered to attain this kind of global excellence so that Philip-

pine chocolate can earn a proud "Tatak Pinoy" label and be recognized globally.

The government must provide the necessary missing services, which the private sector cannot sufficiently do by themselves. These include research, genome banking, breeding, training and marketing. Congress must also allocate a significant budget for cacao development.

Other key high-value products should follow the cacao public-private model and put the Philippines back on the global agriculture leadership map. Only then can we move our desired agriculture transformation from rhetoric to reality. INQ



The author is Agriwatch chair, former secretary of presidential flagship programs and projects, and former undersecretary of the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Trade and Industry. Contact is agriwatch\_phil@yahoo.com.



LIBRARY  
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

## BIMP-EAGA to boost supply chains, says DA

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said that the Brunei Darussalam-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asean Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) partnership will help strengthen the supply and value chains in the agro and fisheries sector in the country.

"With the new trade routes that have been opened... we will be able to take advantage of greater, stronger connectivity and through improvement of shipping linkages, air linkages as well as land transfer connectivity," said DA Undersecretary Mercedita Sombilla during an economic briefing on Wednesday.

Sombilla added that the BIMP-EAGA will also maximize the memorandum of agreement among these four countries. She added that there is one currently in place with Indonesia and Malaysia.

The Philippines and Brunei, meanwhile, discussed potential agricultural trade opportunities last month.

The DA said in order to help Brunei's increasing demand for rice, the Philippines will be exploring heightened production and export opportunities for local Jasmine and sticky rice variants while

the former laid out possibilities of exporting halal meat products to the Philippines.

It also discussed the potential opening of Brunei to Filipino industries as a production hub of halal products.

Sombilla said that the current exports to the four countries are the "traditional" products such as tobacco, coconut oil and halal products.

She also emphasized that Mindanao is a "very strategic region" because it is situated in the center of three major routes of the BIMP-EAGA corridor.

"Mindanao is the nerve center of barter trade of the BIMP-EAGA," said Sombilla.

She added that Davao Region, with its emerging infrastructure and strategic location in the South Eastern Economic Corridor of BIMP-EAGA and the relatively low cost labor, is essential to the growing trade ties with the country's Malaysian partners.

The BIMP-EAGA was established in 1994 by the four countries as a shared strategy to accelerate socioeconomic development of their less developed and geographically remote areas.

JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL



LIBRARY  
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

## Inflation scourge

**L**AST week, the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that inflation went down to 4.7 percent in July from 5.4 percent in June and the high of 8.7 percent in January. Average inflation for January to July was still at 6.8 percent, a far cry from the government's target of 2 to 4 percent.

The PSA also said that inflation among the bottom 30 percent of Filipinos remained high at 5.2 percent. This simply means that the poorest of the poor suffer more than the rest of us.

This is accounted for by the fact that food and basic utilities' prices remained elevated. For food items like sugar and those laced with sugar, the inflation rate was 22 percent; for vegetables, 21.8



FINER  
POINTS

**FERMIN  
ADRIANO**

percent; and bread and milk, over 10 percent. Water was at more than 10 percent while electricity was around 7 percent.

Inflation may be on a downswing but expect the trend to be reversed in the succeeding months. Several negative developments in the global economy will check the progress we have made in taming inflation.

For one, we just have experienced hefty petrol price increases and the

► **Finer B2**



LIBRARY  
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

■ FINER FROM B1

## Inflation scourge

trend is likely to continue. This is due to tightening global supply because of the intensification of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, lower oil output from shale in the US, the refusal of Middle East oil-producing countries to raise output, and the advent of autumn and winter in the West when energy consumption rises.

A price upswing is also to be expected for food products such as wheat, corn and rice. Ukraine and Russia are major sources of wheat and corn. Russian bombings of grain containers in the ports of Ukraine and its threat to sink any ships attempting to load there have affected world supply of wheat and corn.

Wheat is the main ingredient in making bread while corn is mainly used for animal feeds. The shortage of wheat will immediately translate to high bread prices and the shortage of corn will increase prices of livestock, poultry and aquaculture fish — animal feed represents more than 50 percent of the production costs of these food products.

A third adverse development is the Indian government's export ban on non-basmati rice (i.e., white rice) as a result of floods that have affected rice harvests in north India. As India supplies 40 percent of the world rice export market, curbs will impact global rice prices.

The market has responded quickly. The price of 5 percent broken rice from Thailand has breached the \$600 per metric ton (MT) mark when it was just above \$500/MT a few months ago. Similarly, that of Vietnamese

5 percent broken rice is inching toward \$600/MT when it used to be below \$500/MT.

With a 35-percent tariff imposed on rice imports coming from Asean countries, this means that rice imports will have to be sold locally at a wholesale price beyond \$800/MT. This will push upward prices of locally produced rice.

The extent of the damage to palay (unmilled rice) farms by Typhoons "Egay" and "Falcon" has not fully been estimated. But in areas hit hard by floods, rice crops will not be saved because it is just the beginning of the planting season. There is a better chance of recovering around 80 percent of the palay harvest when floods hit rice farms near the harvest season.

Rising rice prices will jack up inflation in the remaining months of this year. Vegetable prices will also exert upward pressure given that the rainy season adversely affects vegetable farms in Benguet and Nueva Vizcaya. Prices of pork, poultry and eggs, and aquaculture will also contribute to higher inflation due to the substantial increase in the prices of animal feed.

Resorting to higher interest rates to dampen demand and tame inflation will obviously not work. One can no longer shrink demand for basic food commodities as these are essential to survival. Further dampening demand for food is tantamount to starving the poor, most likely triggering social unrest. Similarly, our tillers will be hit hard by the higher interest rates they have to pay for their loans

from formal and informal sources.

Under the previous administration, the Department of Finance used to call the attention of the Department of Agriculture (DA), asking for its responses to arrest rising food inflation. Checking food inflation was vital because we found out that during the last 20 years, the contribution of food and nonalcoholic beverages to the consumer price index averaged at around 40 percent annually. This meant that if food inflation was halved, the government would have been able to lower inflation to less than 4 percent.

Measures undertaken included ramping up rice and corn production; liberalization of rice trading, a temporary reduction in corn, pork and poultry prices; timely management of imports by allowing them to arrive during the planting (lean) season of the concerned commodity (rice, corn, vegetables, etc.); and the deployment of Kadiwa stores in strategic areas, particularly in Metro Manila.

Note that despite strict lockdown at that time and supply bottlenecks due to logistical challenges and the African swine fever pandemic, the country never experienced shortages in key commodities, particularly rice, even at the height of the pandemic.

The question now is whether the DA has come out with a plan to respond to these new food security challenges. We hope that the DA is doing its homework.

*fdadriano88@gmail.com*

## Onion price surges to ₱170 per kilo as hoarders are active again – Romualdez

By ELLSON QUISMORIO

The cost of onion has begun to skyrocket from ₱90 to ₱170 per kilo, prompting House Speaker Martin Romualdez to summon officials of the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) after learning that hoarders are actively manipulating prices. ►10



LIBRARY  
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

The sudden increase of onion prices was noted during monitoring conducted by the House Committee on Agriculture and Food.

"Nagsisimula na namang mag-ing aktibo ang mga hoarders at price manipulators ng sibuyas (Hoarders and price manipulators of onion are beginning to be active again). We will nip this problem in the bud," the Leyte 1st District congressman said. "Hindi natin papayagan na pumalo ang presyo nito sa halagang di abot-kaya ng ordinaryong Pilipino (We won't allow onions to reach prices that are too high for the ordinary Filipino to afford)."

In December 2022, prices of onion hovered above an absurd ₱700 per kilo, making it more expensive than meat.

It was due to this price surge that Romualdez ordered the agricultural and food panel to conduct an investigation in aid of legislation on agricultural hoarding. The probe

began last February.

On Wednesday, the panel resumed its inquiry for the first time in the second regular session. Attending the hearing was BPI Director Glenn Panganiban, who told House members that the current price of red onion ranges from ₱140 to ₱170 per kilo.

Romualdez said onion farmers had already sold their harvest to wholesalers, yet the supply remains scarce that lead to higher price of onion.

"Ibig sabihin, nasa cold storage na ang mga ito at pinipigil lang ang release sa market para mapataas ang presyo. Ito ang modus operandi na nadiskubre ng House committee kung kaya napatigil natin ito noon (This means that the onions are being held at cold storage facilities instead of being released into the market so prices may go up. We were able to stop this modus operandi earlier after the House committee discovered it)," Romualdez said.

Date: July 11, 2023 Page: 5



LIBRARY  
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

## Karne ng baboy galing Bohol, bawal sa Cebu

Pansamantalang ipinagbawal ni Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia ang pagpasok ng mga baboy o anumang karne mula sa lalawigan ng Bohol sa loob ng 60 araw.

Sa kanyang inilabas na Executive Order, sinabi ni Garcia na epektibo ang kautusan simula Agosto 8, Miyerkules matapos kumpimahin ng Department of Agriculture (DA) ang presensya ng African Swine Fever (ASF) sa bayan ng

Pilar, Bohol.

Ayon kay Garcia, layon ng EO na protektahan ang P11 bilyong halaga ng industriya ng baboy sa Cebu.

Sa panig naman ni Bohol Gov. Aris Aumentado, iginiit nito na na-contain na umano ang mga kaso ng African Swine Fever sa Pilar.

Nagpatupad na umano sila ng ilang mahigpit na biosecurity measures para mapigilan ang pagkalat ng sakit sa iba pang bayan at

lungsod sa lalawigan.

Hindi pa umano nila matukoy ang pinagmulan ng sakit dahil ang Pilar ay matatagpuan malayo sa mga coastal borders ng lalawigan.

Nanawagan naman si Provincial Veterinarian Dr. Stella Marie Lapid, lalo na sa mga lugar na malapit at nasa loob ng containment zone na iwasan ang pagpapakain ng mga tirang pagkain sa mga alagang baboy. (Doris Franche-Borja)



# Shift to climate resilient agri, fisheries pushed

**A LAWMAKER** underscored the need to shift to climate-resilient agriculture and fisheries to avoid the crippling effects of disasters on the livelihood of farmers and fisherfolk.

According to Rizal Rep. Fidel Nograles, there is a need to prioritize the shift to agriculture and fisheries that can cope with the harsher effects of climate change.

"The sooner we do this, the sooner we can help our farmers and fisherfolk escape the ever-deepening mire of

poverty," Nograles said.

The lawmaker bemoaned that the livelihood of farmers and fisherfolk are endangered whenever typhoons occur.

He said that more needs to be done besides giving aid after typhoons.

"Until we transform our systems of agriculture and fisheries, our farmers and fisherfolk will be dependent on aid that will never be enough to recoup their losses," he said.

"Atsa panahon gayangayon nasunod sunod ang bagyo, na ang nasalanta

ay mas masasalanta pa, lumalalim ang problemang dinaranas nila," he added.

According to the Department of Agriculture, the damage to agriculture and fisheries sector caused by Typhoon Egay reached P1.53 billion, affecting 99,272 farmers and fisherfolk in eight regions, as of July 30.

The DA reported the loss of at least 66,075 metric tons (MT) of produce, including rice, corn, high value crops, livestock and poultry, and fisheries, in the Cordillera Administrative Region

(CAR), Ilocos region (Region 1), Cagayan Valley (Region 2), Central Luzon (Region 3), Calabarzon (Region 4), Mimaropa (Region 4-A), Western Visayas (Region 6) and Caraga (Region 13).

Aside from crop seeds, drugs and biologics for livestock and poultry, and fish fingerlings, the DA said that farmers and fisherfolk may also avail of the P25,000 loan under the Survival and Recovery Loan Program from the Agricultural Credit Policy Council.

*Jester Manalastas*



## DTI and BARMM's MTIT ink pact for Halal industry devt

By ANDREA E. SAN JUAN

[@andreasanjuan](#)

**T**HE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has inked an agreement with the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) Ministry of Trade, Investments, and Tourism (MTIT) as the agency aims to promote Halal industry development to foster economic growth in the region.

In a news statement released on Thursday, DTI said the memorandum of agreement (MOA) aims to promote business development in targeted BARMM areas.

In particular, DTI noted the projects and activities seek provide services to project beneficiaries relating to livelihood, entrepreneurship, investment, financial literacy, marketing access, and other services necessary for the establishment of a business, efficiency, and sustain-

ability of business operations, effective business management, and improvement of products or services.

For his part, BARMM Chief Minister Ahod Ebrahim expressed optimism that the agreement will advance economic development in the region and generate higher income and higher quality employment for the people of Mindanao.

DTI said the partnership is targeted to assist over 100 micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which shall be empowered through capacity building, business counseling, and mentorship leading as Halal practitioners.

Halal is considered a "sunrise" industry, with a current value of \$2.3 trillion in the global market, and is seen to grow by almost 50 percent to \$3.4 trillion next year, DTI noted.

Republic Act No. 9997 mandates the promotion and development of the Philippine Halal

industry, considering the huge potential market of an estimated 1.9 billion in 2020 globally and is projected to grow up to 2 billion by 2030.

### Rebuilding Marawi City

FOR his part, Trade Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual said a partnership between DTI and MTIT would be established to enable the DTI to create a "positive and lasting" impact in the community as they work together to rebuild the city of Marawi.

Pascual recounted the Marawi siege, which he said "resulted in the loss of lives, displacement of thousands of families, destruction of homes and infrastructure facilities and disruption of businesses and economic activities."

With this, the trade chief noted that DTI is taking part in the rebuilding and rehabilitation initiative of the devastated Marawi City by bringing back the robust economy of the community.

"As the focal agency for entrepreneurship, business, and livelihood assistance, the DTI is supporting the implementation of Task Force Bangon Marawi Phase 1 project by providing livelihood starter kits, establishing Shared Service Facilities [SSFs], and facilitating retail spaces for Maranao products that have benefited Internally Displaced Persons [IDPs]," Pascual said in his speech during the signing of the MOA between DTI and BARMM-MTIT.

Meanwhile, in implementing the Task Force Bangon Marawi Phase 2 project solely dedicated to carrying out comprehensive programs for the continuous revival of Marawi City economy, Pascual said, "Our primary goals under the Phase 2 project are to create jobs through social entrepreneurship and local tourism, train entrepreneurs, promote halal local products and services of MSMEs, and restore the creative sector."



LIBRARY  
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

# THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

Date: August 11, 2023 Page: 10

## SKETCHES

ANA MARIE PAMINTUAN

### P50 and bananas

Those following the Senate inquiry into the boat accident in Laguna de Bay that left 27 people dead will come to a common conclusion: there will be many more such deadly mishaps.

The problems that bedevil many aspects of life in our country are the same banes that allowed that accident to happen: weak regulation and enforcement of laws.

We spend so much on national and local legislatures that churn out a voluminous amount of laws and ordinances that are rarely enforced. A large chunk of the national budget goes to local governments all the way down to the grassroots, to the barangays. Yet the nation suffers from chronically weak governance and substandard services.

That accident on July 27 involving the motorized outrigger *Aya Express* was the result of failure of governance.

As the Philippine Coast Guard itself has admitted, there were lapses on the part of PCG personnel that allowed the boat to leave the Binangonan port in Rizal for Talim Island despite the lingering bad weather due to the passage of Typhoon Egay.

Facing a Senate probe last Tuesday, boat captain Donald Anain – one of 43 survivors in the accident – said he merely handed P50 cash and P100 worth of bananas to the PCG on duty at the time, and the *Aya Express* was allowed to sail. At yesterday's prices in the wet market, that's about a kilo of *lakatan* bananas.

The giving of "pampangiti" or "padulas" – something to elicit a smile or grease palms – to PCG officers on duty at the port is common, according to Anain, who also admitted that he has no boat captain's license. He said other gifts include cigarettes and liquor.

For those used to thieves in government who steal billions from the people (and get away with it), P50 in cash and P100 worth of bananas can seem pathetically penny-ante. But perhaps the small amounts involved make the recipients believe the gifts do not constitute bribery.

Republic Act 6713, the 1989 Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees, expressly prohibits government workers from soliciting or accepting "directly or indirectly, any gift, gratuity, favor, entertainment, loan or anything of monetary value from any person in the course of their official duties or in connection with any operation being regulated by, or any transaction which may be affected by the functions of their office."

Hmm... RA 6713 also states: "Public officials and employees and their families shall lead modest lives appropriate to their positions and income. They shall not indulge in extravagant or ostentatious display of wealth in any form" and must "maintain the principle of public accountability."



If top officials can't comply with the law, what can be expected of those in the lower rungs of government? They have so many examples of public officials accepting (and soliciting) gifts worth a million times more than a kilo of bananas.

Also, there are many other boats in the Binangonan port. If each boat captain gives a kilo of bananas, the duty officer can accumulate a large basket or *tiklis* by the end of the day, with perhaps over P1,000 in cash.

There are too many boats operating at the port, Anain told the Senate, so each boat can embark on trips across the lake only about three times a week. Each trip must then be maximized – a euphemism for overloading.

Anain admitted that the *Aya Express*, with a seating capacity for only 35, had 70 people on board, apart from a cargo of soft drink in cans, sacks of rice, bottles and even motorcycles.

Little wonder that when the passengers were frightened by a squall and moved to one side of the boat, it listed and the wooden outrigger failed to serve its purpose of providing balance. The outrigger snapped under the pressure and the wood-hulled boat capsized, spilling tarpaulins and ropes into the water. Survivors said many of those who died got entangled in that mess, unable to swim to the surface. No one wore life vests, as required on passenger boats.

After the banana story came out, the PCG said an association of private boat owners, the Talim Island Motorboat and Patrons Association had in fact taken control of port operations, including clearing boats for sailing. The PCG said it had previously filed charges of syndicated estafa against TIPMOPA members.

So how did the government allow this to happen? Did local government and barangay officials themselves usurp PCG authority at the port?

If the boat captain's story is true, you do feel sorry for the coast guards who feel they need to accept such *pampangiti* to augment their income and bring a smile to their face at the end of a working day.

The PCG surely lacks personnel to inspect every commercial vessel plying the more than 7,600 islands in our country, which has one of the world's most extensive coastlines.

These days the PCG must also dedicate much of its manpower and resources to patrolling the country's western seaboard against greedy foreign devils who refuse to abide by international maritime rules. In this task, the PCG deserves all the support it can get.

Our civilian coast guard is pitted against the China Coast Guard, which is under its Central Military Commission chaired by President Xi Jinping. The CCG is authorized to engage not just in maritime law enforcement but also in combat. The PCG, being a civilian agency like the coast guards of other countries, is not even authorized to equip its vessels with heavy weapons.

Policy makers may have to unburden the PCG of the task of clearing commercial vessels (or at least the smaller boats) for sailing throughout our archipelago. The PCG said the local government of Binangonan and the Maritime Industry Authority should take control of port operations and boat safety protocols in that area.

The PCG undoubtedly will appreciate no longer getting the blame for boat accidents, which under the prevailing circumstances are guaranteed to continue.



LIBRARY  
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

## Farmer who makes mushroom products shares tips on professionalizing a farm business

**G**race Pascual-Holganza, a corporate accountant by trade, is the owner of Mumshroom, a company that sells products such as chips, patties, and sisig made from white oyster mushrooms cultivated on her family farm in Nueva Ecija.

Though she technically started Mumshroom in 2018, just two months after being inspired by the street food in Taiwan, it wasn't until 2020 – during the pandemic – that she was able to turn her hobby into a successful side business.

Part of Mumshroom's success lies in its professionalism, characterized by Pascual-Holganza's systematic approach to growing both her farm and her business. Her journey will be featured in the Agriculture section of Manila Bulletin. She



**AVANT GARDENER**  
YVETTE TAN

also shared five tips on professionalizing a business:

Utilize your network. Today's market has become extra competitive, so don't be afraid to ask for help or collaborate with people whose expertise or talents will be of help to your business in different aspects that include conceptualization, production, and marketing. "You have to deal with professionals," Pascual-Holganza said. "You should have a lot of contacts to market your products."

Patience is a must. Starting a venture can be lonely and frustrating. If one wants to succeed, they must resist the urge to give up. "Being patient, being persistent," Pascual-Holganza enumerates. "The challenges will always be there," she adds in Taglish. "(Trust in the) trial and error (process). Don't get frustrated."

Secure your funds. There are many success stories that involve business owners struggling to find funds in the beginning. However, Pascual-Holganza advises having enough funds allows the budding entrepreneur room for experimentation in order to perfect their product. "(You) should be ready for

some costs that will be incurred for doing a certain project."

Have a support group. A wife, a mother, and a corporate accountant, Pascual-Holganza would not have had the time to develop Mumshroom without the support and understanding of her family, friends, and colleagues. "You cannot do it unless you have friends or family who support you because this is a passion project," she said.

Continue to innovate. Pascual-Holganza didn't stop with mushroom chips. She also developed mushroom patties and sisig, and continues to develop products and collaborate with experts to this day. "People want novelty. When I introduced chips, everyone wanted chips, but there will come a time when they'll want something else. The constant is change for improvements (and) product innovation... (Customers) want to try new things."

Watch out for Grace Pascual-Holganza's story about how she built Mumshroom from a hobby to a profitable side business in the Agriculture section of Manila Bulletin. It's coming soon!



## NEWS BRIEF

### Pananim sa Ilocos napeste ng kuhol

Sinira ng mga kuhol o "golden snail" ang isang palayan matapos ang pagbaha dulot ng Bagyong Egay sa bayan ng Marcos, Ilocos Norte, ayon sa Ilocos Norte Agricultural Office (INAO).

Sa report, ayon sa INAO, makikita na ilang

ektaryang pananim na palay ang halos maubos ang tangkay dahil sa pamemeste ng mga kuhol.

Dahil dito, puwersahang inani ng mga magsasaka ang kanilang pananim na mga palay at pinatutuyo na

lamang para maiwasan ang pagdami ng mga golden snail.

Ayon sa ahensiya, ilang araw na nakababad sa tubig-baha ang mga tanim dahilan para pamugaran ang mga ito ng mga kuhol.

Samantala, ayon sa Marcos local government unit, aabot sa mahigit ng P49 milyon ang pinsala sa agrikultura dahil sa nagdaang Bagyong Egay. (Allan Bergonia)

# Malaya Business Insight

Date: July 11, 2023 Page: A6



LIBRARY  
DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

## Soybeans, corn firm

SINGAPORE- Soybean and corn futures edged lower on Thursday as market participants took positions ahead of a key US supply-demand report amid forecasts of improved weather for crops in the Midwest.

Wheat rose, recouping some of the losses from the previous session on support from risks to supplies from Ukraine and Russia.

"US weather is looking good for crops and the market is waiting to see estimates from the US Department of Agriculture on corn and soybean yields," said one Singapore-based trader.

The most-active soybean contract on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) was up 0.4 percent at \$13.13-1/4 a bushel, and corn rose 0.3 percent to \$4.95-3/4 a bushel.

Wheat climbed 1 percent to \$6.41-1/4 a bushel.

Traders are adjusting positions before the US Department of Agriculture issues a monthly crop report on Friday. Analysts on average project the World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates (WASDE) will trim the forecast for US soybean and corn production. - *Reuters*