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■ Advocates of the System of Rice Intensification claim it can improve the production levels of rice farmers in the country. Photo shows a technology demonstration for rice farmers in Cabiga, Samar, conducted by the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization in September 2023. PHILMECH FILE PHOTO

Higher budget eyed for rice intensification program

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) is seeking a higher budget for the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) initiative so it can be upscaled in the Philippines.

Agriculture Undersecretary for Rice Industry Development Leocadio Sebastian said that the SRI program of the DA has an approved budget of P250 million for its implementation.

However, he said that he hopes "that a bigger budget would be allocated for SRI in the future."

"As conventional rice production practices become increasingly unprofitable, many farmers are turning to SRI as a means to continually enhance and embrace a more efficient and effective approach to rice cultivation," the DA-Philippine Council for Agriculture and Fisheries (PCAF) said over the weekend.

SRI is a climate-smart, agroecological

methodology for increasing the productivity of rice by changing the management of plants, soil, water, and nutrients.

According to Regional Agricultural and Fishery Council-Zamboanga Peninsula Vice Chairman and SRI practitioner Adelberto Baniqued, there are already various initiatives to implement SRI around the country, but financing prevents it from being widely practiced.

Sebastian said the Philippines has been left behind by other countries in terms of reaping the benefits of SRI.

He also emphasized the importance of implementing farm clustering for local farmers to maximize the benefits of SRI.

"This would allow them to negotiate for more premium rice prices, thereby improving their income," Sebastian added.

In a statement last week, the DA noted

► **Program B2**



■ PROGRAM FROM B1

Higher budget eyed for rice

that SRI could help address rising input costs and water insufficiency for cultivating rice as the country faces another El Niño weather disturbance.

Under the SRI, rice plants are spaced wider and the use of natural inputs like farm wastes and manure is encouraged to reduce the use of chemical inputs. Also, soil

health is constantly monitored.

Sebastian believes that the SRI has a big future in the Philippines.

To further identify the innovations and policy gains in SRI, the PCAF hosted a forum that addressed the need for an increased budget allocation for organic inputs, inclusion in research and development initiatives, and en-

hanced information campaigns.

Various country case studies on the benefits and challenges in the promotion, adoption and scaling-up of SRI in India, Indonesia, Chile and the Philippines were also discussed during the forum that was attended by over 130 participants from the industry.

JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL



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DA targets higher abaca production

BY JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) aims to increase local abaca production to sustain the Philippines' dominance as the world's top producer of abaca fiber.

The Philippine Fiber Development Authority (PhilFIDA) said it was essential to continuously explore strategies to address the ongoing challenges in the abaca industry.

"We must strive to increase the production of high-quality fibers. This entails addressing various issues, including the availability of disease-free planting materials that yield true abaca fibers," Genevieve Velicaria-Guevarra, DA assistant secretary and concurrent OIC executive director, said last week.

Guevarra also noted the importance of ensuring well-trained

and committed fiber inspectors who are adequately supported with resources to enforce the rules, regulations and standards on abaca good agricultural practices and fiber inspection.

"Additionally, we need to maintain continuous treatment of abaca areas with high disease incidence and conduct research that leads to the development of technologies for adoption by abaca farmers, among other initiatives," she said.

According to PhilFIDA, abaca has become a major source of livelihood for farmers and workers, particularly in Western Visayas. It added that it has allocated a

significant portion of its budget to abaca programs and projects and that 66 percent of its technical personnel are dedicated to implementing these initiatives.

"The goal is to sustain the country's global dominance in the abaca fiber market, as it currently supplies approximately 86 percent of the world's abaca fiber requirements," said PhilFIDA.

Guevarra also urged the department and stakeholders to continue working towards increasing the demand for abaca. "This requires us to explore innovative uses for abaca and expand into new markets," she continued.

Data from the Philippine Statistics Authority showed that abaca production during the second quarter this year was estimated at 17,637 metric tons (MT), down 1.8 percent from 17,967 MT in the same period last year.

The Bicol Region recorded the

highest abaca production of 5,987 MT or 33.9 percent of the country's total production. Eastern Visayas followed with 2,873 MT and Caraga with 2,445 MT.

To highlight the crop's important role in the economy, the Western Visayas Regional Satellite Office of PhilFIDA organized a stakeholders' forum last week. This allowed abaca farmers, growers, processors, exporters and traders to raise their issues, which were addressed by experts.

The forum focused on the importance of various fibers, such as abaca, pineapple, silk, cotton, and others. Participants spanned a diverse group of stakeholders, including farmer-leaders, fiber crops exporters, processors, traders, representatives from national government agencies, nongovernment organizations, and local government units of Western Visayas.

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Dissecting our inflation

Bad news: Prices in the Philippines have risen much faster than in our Asean peers this year. Worse news: Our price increases surged again in the last two months, reversing the slowing trend since the year started with a record pace not seen since late 2008. In numerical terms, our inflation rate had again risen to 5.3 and 6.1 percent in August and September, respectively, reversing a steady decline since its 14-year peak of 8.7 percent in January that bottomed out in July at 4.7 percent.

In contrast, inflation in our Asean-6 peers Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Vietnam slowed down last month, from rates already much slower than ours. While Singapore nudged up to 4.1 percent from 4.0 percent in August, that's still much lower than ours. Our somewhat unique inflation picture prompted the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to make the surprise off-cycle move last week of finally raising its policy interest rate from 6.25 to 6.5 percent, after holding steady since April. Through that period, BSP was under constant pressure to raise it because the United States Federal Reserve Bank had already raised its rate twice (from 5.0 to 5.25, then 5.5 percent). And when the BSP doesn't follow the US Fed's rate hikes, many worry about dollars being withdrawn out of our economy to flow back into the US, attracted by higher yields. This depresses the value of the peso (or raises the peso-dollar exchange rate). But the BSP's primary mandate is to manage inflation, not so much the exchange rate unless its movement also begins to drive inflation. So with the recent peso decline accompanying resurging inflation, the sudden change of heart at the BSP is no big surprise.

Even so, I know that finally raising interest rates further was not an easy decision for the BSP to make. Interest rate setting is like walking a tightrope because there's usually



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CIELITO F. HABITO

a tradeoff between price stability and economic growth (and with it, jobs). The latest rate hike worries our other economic managers who fear its growth-stifling effects at a time when economic activities are faltering, evidenced by the worse-than-expected GDP growth slowdown in the second quarter. The third quarter is over and the numbers won't be in until later in November, but the data on advance indicators such as volume of manufacturing output, electricity consumption, building permits, and investment approvals don't paint an encouraging picture. At the same time, doubts are being raised, including by Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Arsenio Balisacan, on how well further interest rate hikes could quell our resurging inflation without generally choking the overall economy.

A closer examination of what drives our inflation makes it easier to understand Balisacan's skepticism. Since last year's inflation upsurge, food prices have been its primary driver. Last month, food prices rose 10 percent against the same month last year, up from the 8.2 percent posted in August. Rice was the main culprit, with price rising 17.9 percent, double the 8.7 percent rise in August.

According to the Philippine Statistics Authority, 61 percent of the 6.1 percent overall inflation rate, or 3.7 percentage points, traced to food and non-alcoholic beverages; food alone accounted for 3.6 percentage points. Restaurants and hotels contributed 11.4 percent share or 0.7 percentage point, while housing, water, electricity, gas, and other fuels had an 8.6 percent share or 0.5 percentage point. Note that the higher costs of restaurants also traced mainly to higher food costs, while externally driven energy cost hikes prominently drove cost increases in hotels, housing, and utilities. And interest rates have little to do with these.

Both BSP Governor Eli Remolona and his predecessor Felipe Medalla have both publicly expressed discomfort at having to use the demand-side tools at the BSP's disposal to address an inflation problem clearly caused by supply-side shortcomings. The outspoken Medalla had even chided the Department of Agriculture (DA) for failing on its task to ease supplies (hence prices) of food commodities, especially as it insisted on continued tight regulation of imports when domestic supplies were very tight—after having failed on its basic goal to raise productivity and cost competitiveness of our farms and farmers over past decades.

The DA must finally get its act together if we are to spare the BSP from having to keep using the shotgun policy of interest rate hikes to quell inflation, inflicting a lot of collateral damage on the rest of the economy as it does, with the poor always the worst hit. It must start with fundamental restructuring and reorganization of the DA bureaucracy and budget, along with a major shakedown to rid it of the unwanted elements that have traditionally stood in the way of needed reform.

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Suspended DA exec maintains innocence over onion crisis

By **BELLA CARIASO**

Suspended Agriculture Assistant Secretary Kristine Evangelista broke her silence yesterday as she maintained innocence after the Office of the Ombudsman ordered the filing of criminal charges against her and 17 others in connection with the onion crisis in 2022 when retail prices of onions reached as high as P720 per kilo.

In a message sent to **The STAR**, Evangelista said that prior to the allegations against her, she was not accused of any misdeeds.

"Not once have I been accused of corruption. Farmers and stakeholders of the agricultural sector whom I worked with can attest to this," she said.

Aside from Evangelista, the ombudsman ordered the filing of graft and falsification charges against Food Terminal Inc. vice president for operations John Gabriel Benedict Trinidad III and 16 others after the FTI procured onions from the Bonena Multipurpose Cooperative at higher prices

and sold them to Kadiwa stores at lower retail prices.

In a 26-page resolution, the ombudsman said it found probable cause to indict Evangelista and Trinidad with violation of Section 3 (e) of Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act and falsification of documents as defined and penalized under Article 172 of the Revised Penal Code.

"The campaign to have affordable food for each Filipino should continue. People who know me are aware that I am not corrupt. The people are with me in my advocacy to reform the system for the benefit of the farmers," she added.

Farmers' group Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (Sinag) executive director Jayson Cainglet said the ombudsman's order excluded hoarders who profited from excessive onion prices last year.

"The government officials who were remiss in their duties and did nothing to go after im-

porters and cold storage owners had their way in controlling the release of stocks and created the scenario of artificial supply shortage were identified during the congressional hearings," Cainglet said.

The Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) did not import white onions when they were asked to do so by onion stakeholders since stocks were dwindling, he added.

Due diligence should have alerted officials of the inherent relationships of companies and personalities as traders, importers, consolidators and cold storage owners, he noted.

"Some of these personalities have pending cases since 2014 filed by the NBI (National Bureau of Investigation) against certain BPI officials and members of the then national garlic action team. The same modus was used, when only a handful of traders and cold storage owners, including onion farmers that acted as conduit and importers, are controlling the supply," he explained.

Cainglet said that Sinag would rather see those who truly manipulated onion prices and their cohorts in the government charged and convicted.



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Potato price rises, but to normalize with harvest – DA

By **ALEXIS ROMERO**

The price of potatoes has risen, but is expected to normalize because of the harvest, which is seen to augment the supply of the root crop, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said yesterday.

Agriculture Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa linked the higher prices of potatoes and other crops to recent typhoons that entered and hit the Philippines.

"This (increase in the price of potatoes) may be attributed to the typhoons that hit the country during the months of July and August," De Mesa said in a statement released by the Presidential Communications Office.

He added that the DA is looking into the situation, but is expecting the price to normalize because of the incoming supply.

"The peak of harvest within the last quarter of this year up to the first quarter of next year, 2024, will make a positive impact on the supply and prices of potatoes," the agriculture official said.

Data from the DA, whose secretary is President Marcos, showed that the average price of white potatoes from Oct. 16 to 20 was P229.19 per kilogram, higher than the P193.92 per kilogram from Oct. 9 to 13 and P172.33 per kilogram from Oct. 2 to 6.

As of Oct. 27, the price of potatoes ranges from P140 to P240 per kilogram.

Prices of onion and garlic, however, remain stable at Commonwealth, Guadalupe, Las Piñas, Marikina, Mega Q-mart, Muñoz, Pasay, Pasig, Quinta, San Andres, Muntinlupa and Pritil markets based on the daily monitoring conducted by the DA

Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service.

Citing data on the average prices last September and October, De Mesa said the prices range from P140 to P142 per kilogram for local red onion, P125 to P130 per kilogram for local white onion, P120 to P125 per kilogram for imported white onion, P125 to P140 per kilogram for imported garlic and P500 per kilogram for local garlic.

Marcos has ordered a crackdown against smugglers and hoarders of agricultural goods, saying he would not tolerate activities that sabotage the economy.

Malacañang gave assurance that the DA has been regularly monitoring the prices of basic commodities and ensuring that the movement in the market value chain would be addressed quickly.



Prices of onion, garlic stable

BY JED MACAPAGAL

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said prices of onion, garlic and other basic goods have been stable from September to October.

However, DA Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa said in a statement price increases for other crops, particularly potatoes, have been recorded due to the spate of typhoons that hit the country in July and August.

De Mesa said DA records showed the average prices in September and October ranged from P140 to P142 for local red onion, P125 to P130 for local white onion, P120 to P125 for imported white onion, P125 to P140 for imported garlic and P500 for local garlic.

DA said the price ranges were based on the daily monitoring of prices conducted by the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance



A street vendor in Q-Mart Market in Quezon City is shown on Jan. 8, 2023. The DA said average prices of local red onion in September and October ranged from P140 to P142 per kg. (Photo by ROLLY SALVADOR)

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PRICES

Service in the public markets of Commonwealth, Guadalupe, Las Piñas, Marikina, Mega Q-mart, Muñoz, Pasay, Pasig, Quinta, San Andres, Muntinlupa and Pritil.

De Mesa said the DA expects the price of potatoes to normalize soon with incoming supply from local harvest.

“The peak of harvest within the last quarter this year up to the first quarter of next year will make a positive impact on the supply and prices of potatoes,” he said.

Based on monitoring by the DA on public markets in the National Capital Region as of yesterday, the price of local red onion was at

P120 to P190 per kg; local white onion at P100 to P170 per kg; imported medium white onion at P100 to P160 per kg; local garlic at P500 per kg; and imported garlic at P120 to P160 per kg.

Monitoring showed the price of white potatoes is at P140 to P240 per kg.

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The latest price spike is seen in potatoes—DA

By SAMUEL P. MEDENILLA [@sam_medenilla](#)

AFTER onions, sugar and rice, the potato is now the latest food item to be hit with a price spike, according to latest data from the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Based on its price monitoring, DA reported the weekly average price of 10 to 12 pieces of white potato in selected markets in the National Capital Region (NCR) from October 16 to 20, 2023 reached as

high as P229.19.

This was 80 percent higher compared to its average weekly price of P127.21 of white potatoes from August 21 to 25, 2023.

In a press statement issued last

Monday, Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa attributed the trend to typhoon damage to the country's agriculture sector in previous months.

"This [price increase of potatoes] may be attributed to the typhoons that hit the country during the months of July and August," De Mesa said.

However, the prices of other vegetables have changed slightly or even dropped since last August.

Among the vegetables which became even cheaper in the last two months based on DA's weekly price monitoring in NCR were eggplant, carrots, Baguio beans, pechay and chayote.

Even the price of red onions, which reached as high as P720 per kilogram (kg) last December due to a supply shortage, were being sold at between P140 and P142 per kg.

The price of sugar and rice, which also experienced similar price spikes earlier this year, have remained stable this month.

De Mesa said they are confident the price of potato will "normalize" amid the ongoing harvest season.

"The peak of harvest within the last quarter this year up to the first quarter of next year-2024 will make a positive impact on the supply and prices of potatoes," he said.



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DA ensures prices of onion, garlic, other basic goods stable

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) has been regularly monitoring the prices of basic commodities, and continues to ensure that the movement in market value chain will be quickly addressed.

Based on the daily monitoring of prices conducted by the Agribusiness and Marketing Assistance Service, prices of onion and garlic remain stable in Commonwealth, Guadalupe, Las Piñas, Marikina, Mega Q-mart, Muñoz, Pasay, Pasig,

Quinta, San Andres, Muntinlupa and Pritil markets.

"According to our records of the average prices in September and October this year 2023, the prices range from P140 to P142 for local red onion, P125 to P130 for local white onion, P120 to P125 for imported white onion, P125 to P140. P140 for imported garlic and P500 for local garlic, respectively," Assistant Secretary Arnel de Mesa reported.

De Mesa, however, noted

an increase in price for other crops, particularly potatoes which he said resulted from the spate of typhoons that hit the country in July and August.

"This (price increase of potatoes) may be attributed to the typhoons that hit the country during the months of July and August," De Mesa said.

De Mesa however stressed that the DA is looking into the situation and expects the situation to normalize with the incoming supply. PCO



Pilipino Star NGAYON

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Ngayong araw na ito ay ibabahagi ko sa inyo ang isa sa model Urban Farm na aking napuntahan na makikita sa isang community park sa Krus na Ligas, Quezon City.

Marami na akong urban garden na nabisita sa Metro Manila pero masasabi kong kakaiba ang ganda ng Krunali Urban Farm na ang caretaker ay si Jimmy De Jesus Jr.

Ayon kay Jimmy, inalok

ni Jimmy ay ang pamimigay niya ng libreng punla sa lahat ng gustong magtanim.

Walang requirements na hinihingi si Jimmy sa mga nagnanais na mag-avail ng kanyang mga punla.

"Punta lang po kayo dito sa amin at humingi ng available na punla na inyong itatanim at bibigyan po namin kayo basta ipangako lang po ninyo na aalagaan ninyo ang inyong mga tanim na hala-

sauce mula sa ani niyang siling habanero, siling labuyo at carolina reaper na pinakamaanghang na sili sa buong mundo.

May produkto na ring lettuce chips at krunali spring

Linggo, November 5, 2023, mapapanood ninyo ang aking panayam kay Jimmy at farm tour sa Krunali Urban Farm sa programang Masaganang Buhay TV at Radio Show ng Magsasakang Reporter.



'Free punla' KRUNALI URBAN FARM



Ang mga tanim ni Jimmy sa Krunali Urban Farm.

sa kanya na tamnan ng mga edible plants ang community park ng barangay Krus na Ligas.

Dahil passion o hiilig naman niya ang magtanim ng iba't ibang uri ng makakain na halaman ay tinanggap niya ang alok.

Inayos nila ang dating napabayaang na community park, tinamnan ng iba't ibang uri ng gulay at prutas, ngayon ay luntian at maaliliwalas na ang kapaligiran na binibisita ng marami nating kababayan.

Maraming kabataan ang nagtutungo sa community park, hindi upang maglaro sa halip ay nagkaroon ng interest para mag-aral na magtanim ng kanilang makakain na halaman.

Bukas-palad naman si Jimmy na ibahagi sa iba ang kanyang hiram na talento sa Panginoon at i-share sa iba ang kanyang nalalaman sa pagtatanim.

Bukod sa pagiging gardener, si Jimmy ay nagbuay and sell ng kotse, pero mas maraming oras na ginugol niya sa maghapon para magtanim at magturo sa mga nais matuto ng pagtatanim.

"Dati ay conventional farming ang aking ibinabahagi sa iba, ngayon pati ang Aquaponics, Hydroponics at pag-aalaga ng rabbit ay isine-share ko na," sabi ni Jimmy.

Isa sa pumukaw ng aking pansin at damdamin noong bisitahin ng crew ng Masaganang Buhay ang garden

man na galing po sa amin," pahayag ni Jimmy.

Natural at organic na

roll si Jimmy.

Sinabi pa ni Jimmy, ang Krunali Urban Farming ay



Ang Magsasakang Reporter kasama si Jimmy De Jesus Jr.

pamamaraan ang ginagawang pagtatanim ni Jimmy. Gumagawa siya ng kanyang sariling concoction, compost at iba pang ginagamit na pataba sa kanyang mga tanim na halaman.

Nang pumunta ako sa garden ni Jimmy ay mayroon siyang 12 rabbit at ang manure ng kanyang mga alaga ay siyang ginagamit na pataba sa kanyang mga tanim na halaman.

Ang pinapakain naman sa mga rabbit ay mga dahon at sanga ng mga na-trim na halaman.

"Cycle ang ginagawa ko, ang dumi ng rabbit ay natural fertilizer habang ang kinakain ng rabbit ay kinukuha ko sa garden," aniya.

Marami na ring produkto ngayon si Jimmy na kanyang ani sa garden tulad ng Chili

Samantala, sa mga nagnanais naman po na mapalalim pa ang kaalaman kaugnay ng natural at organic farming ay panoorin po ninyo ang mga video tutorial ko sa aking Youtube Channel na ANG MAGSASAKANG REPORTER tungkol sa step by step na pagtatanim, pag-aalaga at sikreto ng pagkakaroon ng magandang tanim na halaman.

Para sa iba pang tips at sikreto sa pagtatanim ng iba't ibang uri ng halaman ay maaari po kayong manood at makinig ng aking TV at Radio program na Masaganang Buhay tuwing Linggo, alas-7:00 hanggang alas-8:00 ng umaga sa OnePH Signal TV, Channel 1 ng TV-5. Mapapakinggan din po sa Radyo Singko 92.3 News FM.

Maaari rin kayong manood at mag-subscribe sa aking Youtube Channel na ANG MAGSASAKANG REPORTER at Facebook na Mer Layson at Facebook page na Ang Magsasakang Reporter, TV host Vlogger para sa iba pang kaalaman at impormasyon sa pagtatanim ng iba't ibang uri ng halaman sa pamamagitan ng organikong pamamaraan.

Tuwing araw ng Martes ay regular ninyong mababasa ang aking kolum dito sa **Pilipino Star Ngayon (PSN)** ng Star Group of Publications.

Sa mga tanong at komento ay maaari ninyo akong i-text, huwag po tawag, sa 09178675197. STAY SAFE, HAPPY FARMING, GOD BLESS US ALL.



Soybeans, corn rise

CANBERRA- Chicago soybean futures rose to their highest in six weeks on Monday, as speculators bet on higher prices amid strong demand for US beans and soymeal.

Wheat futures fell slightly as shipments from Ukrainian Black Sea ports resumed after a three-day pause, while corn rose.

"There is strong demand for soymeal which is flowing through to US soybean pricing," said Andrew Whitelaw, an analyst at Australian consultancy Episode 3.

"One factor contributing to this is that Argentina has had a poor crop, and that is reducing globally available meal supplies,"

Whitelaw added.

The most-active soybean contract on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) was up 0.8 percent at \$13.30-1/4 a bushel, having earlier reached \$13.31, the highest since Sept. 18.

CBOT wheat was 0.3 percent lower at \$5.74 a bushel and corn rose 0.6 percent to \$4.83-1/2 a bushel.

Soybeans were on track for their biggest monthly gain since February 2022, up about 4.3 percent. Soymeal has rallied even faster, with CBOT December meal up around 15 percent this month after reaching a contract high of \$448.4 a ton on Friday. -Reuters

Economic coercion destroys foundations of global trade

ECONOMIC coercion is a threat or actual imposition of economic costs by a state on a target with the objective of extracting a policy concession. US experts said this has become an increasingly prominent instrument of Chinese foreign policy. Chinese economic coercion tactics take on many forms. Some are as blatant and public as unilateral, weaponized use of trade sanctions and embargoes for China's economic and business advantage.

Victor Cha, senior vice president for Asia and Korea Chair at Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), told the US Congress in May that China's economic coercion has become part and parcel of its foreign policy against many trading partners.

"Countries that interact with Taiwan, support democracy in Hong Kong, oppose genocide in Xinjiang or offend any other 'core interests' of China face discriminatory, non-WTO-conforming sanctions and embargoes. Targets of this weaponization of trade since 2008 range widely. Eighteen Western and Asian countries, including Japan, Lithuania, Norway, and Australia, and over 123 private companies, including Walmart and the National Basketball Association, have been targeted, precipitating tens of billions of dollars in economic damage," Cha said.

He said that from Beijing's perspective, coercion works. After sanctioning South Korea's Lotte company in 2016 and embargoing imports of German pork in 2020, both countries remained silent when China passed the national security law in Hong Kong suppressing democracy.

"In 2018 to preempt Chinese sanctions, The Gap clothing company issued a public apology and removed from sale a t-shirt design with a map of China that did not include Taiwan and Tibet. Japanese fashion clothing retailer Uniqlo remained silent on human rights violations in Xinjiang," according to Cha.

He added that after a Chinese ban on Norwegian salmon in 2010, the country's leaders refused to meet with the Dalai Lama when he visited in 2015.

China instituted a five-year ban on Columbia Tristar Pictures after it released "Seven Years in Tibet," starring Brad Pitt, because of the movie's portrayal of government suppression.

The Philippines also experienced China's weaponization of trade. During the Scarborough Shoal dispute in 2012, China masked its restriction of Philippine banana imports behind phytosanitary and sanitary concerns, saying that Philippine bananas were contaminated with mealybugs.

"Dealing with China's weaponization of trade is a critical pre-requisite for the success of the Biden administration's strategic competition with China. What is needed is a peer competition strategy that can stop this behavior. The US and like-minded partners need to consider a new 'collective resilience' strategy to deter China's economic coercion," Cha told the US Congress.

He added: "Most of the targets of Chinese economic coercion are asymmetrically trade dependent on it. But this should not obscure the reality that many of these countries also export items to China upon which the Chinese market is highly dependent, and in some cases almost 100 percent dependent. For example, China is over 90 percent dependent on the import of silver powder from Japan, which it uses to make solar panels. The next three suppliers of silver powder to China are the US and South Korea, making up nearly 100 percent of their dependence on these countries."

Cha said China is over 80 percent dependent on the import of Kentucky Bluegrass seed from the United States, which it uses for its soccer pitches. The next largest exporter is Denmark, again comprising almost 100 percent of its grass seed imports. It is nearly 100 percent dependent on whiskey from the UK and Japan, and fine brandies from France.

From Bloomberg: "Trade chiefs from developed nations emphasized on Saturday the need to strengthen their supply chains with a wider group of partners to counter economic coercion. India, Indonesia, Australia, Chile and Kenya—invited to the Group of Seven gathering of trade ministers in Osaka, Japan—play a key role in helping the world's most advanced economies build resilient trade networks in a world filled with geopolitical tensions, according to the G-7."

The foundations of global trade, traditionally anchored by the World Trade Organization, "are being shaken by increasing the use of economic coercion and market distortion measures such as opaque industrial subsidies," Japanese Trade Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura said, without citing specific nations or instances.

China's use of economic coercion continues to harm its image around the world. It pushes countries to stand united against Beijing's aggression. The G-7, for example, is expanding and strengthening its group of partners to counter China's economic coercion. The goal is to ensure that individual states do not have to fend for themselves against China's predatory practices.