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Laurel expects ₱4-B port to boost trade in Mindanao

By GABRIELL CHRISTEL GALANG

The Department of Agriculture (DA) expects that the Lagonglong Port in Misamis Oriental would bolster trade capacity in Mindanao, enhance logistical capabilities in the region, and pave the way for the creation of new job opportunities.

LAUREL

In a statement, Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel Jr. said the ₱4-billion Lagonglong port is a timely infrastructure project that aligns with the government's objective to increase food production.

"Lagonglong Port dovetails with the Department of Agriculture's push to boost agricultural production, ensure accessibility to affordable food, and achieve food security for our countrymen," Laurel said at the groundbreaking ceremony for the project.

Expected to be finished by March 2025, the project is a private commercial port development led by Amadi MGT Terminals Inc.

"We should build more ports like this," said Laurel as he expressed the importance of ports to improve agricultural modernization. "This port, once finished, I believe will reduce feed costs by at least 2.5 percent, or as much as five percent. It will reduce the cost of fertilizers also by five percent maybe, or as much as 10 percent, depending on the price."

The agriculture chief also elaborated that the port would upgrade efficiency in terms of transporting vital goods and maintaining the quality of agricultural products through storage facilities.

Aboitiz Construction is currently building the multi-grain terminal for Amadi.

The Manila Times®

Date: 24 JAN 2024 Page: B2

Mindanao port project to boost trade, says DA

A P4-BILLION port project in Mindanao by the private sector can boost local trade and reduce the price of feeds, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said upon completion, the Lagonglong Port project in Misamis Oriental would reduce feed costs from 2.5 percent to as much as 10 percent.

"It will reduce the cost of fertilizers also by 5 percent, maybe, or as much as 10 percent, depending on the price," Laurel said during the groundbreaking ceremony for the project.

Expected to be finished by March 2025, the port will also host storage facilities and modern equipment to handle international and domestic cargo. It will also provide an annual throughput capacity of 3.3 million metric tons for bulk cargo.

The Amadi MGT Terminals Inc. will invest P1.4 billion for the initial phase of development. For its part, Aboitiz Construction will also take part in the to build the multi-grain terminal for Amadi.

Laurel also said the Lagonglong Port aligns with the DA's thrust "to boost agricultural production, ensure accessibility to affordable food, and achieve food security for our countrymen."

"We should build more ports like this. This is critical to the modernization of our country," Laurel said, noting that the port initiative will help preserve the quality of agricultural products and raw materials and enhance the transport of essential goods upon completion.

Also, the Lagonglong Port is expected to stimulate the establishment of factories, processing plants, and other value-adding facilities.

"I've seen that happen, and I've done it. In Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, and other areas in the Western Pacific where we built ports," he added.

Laurel added that he requested Amadi to allocate space for cold storage, ice stands, and silos to store various agricultural products for the DA.

JANINE ALEXIS MIGUEL

BusinessWorld

Date: 24 JAN 2024 Page: 10/S1

P4-B port to boost food shipments

THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture (DA) said that it is aiming to capitalize on the construction of the P4-billion Lagonglong Port in Misamis Oriental to increase food shipments in Mindanao by 2025.

In a statement on Tuesday, Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. said the port's construction aligns with the DA's "push to boost agricultural production, ensure accessibility to affordable food, and achieve food security."

"Lagonglong Port promises to increase trade capacity in Mindanao, enhance logistical capability in the region, and create new jobs," the DA said, noting its target to be completed by March, 2025.

Mr. Laurel said he requested the private developer, Amadi MGT Terminals, Inc., to provide the DA space for cold storage, ice stands and silos for agricultural goods at the port to enhance the efficiency of transporting and storing vital goods while maintaining the quality of crops and raw materials. — **Adrian H. Halili**

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS

Date: JAN. 24, 2024 Page: B1 & B3

DA continues to fill up top posts

BIZ BUZZ

A former city administrator of Cavite is joining the ranks of the Department of Agriculture (DA) as one of its key officials.

The DA announced on Tuesday the appointment of **Jerome Oliveros** as undersecretary for special concerns and official development assistance-foreign aid/grants.

Oliveros, the former city administrator of Bacoor, Cavite, is tasked with overseeing the development and implementation of agricultural policies and projects aimed at improving the quality of life of disadvantaged and cultural community groups, children, youth, persons with disability, senior citizens and elderly.

He is also responsible for identifying and coordinating project proposals that can be backed by possible grants/aid from official development assistance or institutional donors and potential partners as well as monitoring these projects upon securing the funding.

Oliveros' appointment is the latest change implemented by the DA headed by **Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.** as it strives to modernize the farm sector and boost food production.

May these appointments help bring about the changes that the DA hopes will lead to improved food security and better incomes for farmers and fisherfolk. —JORDEENE B. LAGARE

New Deutche Bank CEO

More and more foreign banks are bringing back Filipino talents to lead their Philippine operations. In the case of expatriate Pinoys, it's a great opportunity to relocate back home and contribute to the motherland.

Deutsche Bank is the latest foreign bank to make such a move. The German bank has named **Rodolfo "Dino" Siason** as chief country officer and head of corporate Bank for the Philippines effective April 1 (subject to necessary regulatory approvals).

Siason will succeed **Michael Chua**, who is retiring after working in the banking industry for nearly 30 years. Under Chua's leadership, the local business achieved significant revenue growth and successfully executed a number of landmark transactions.

For his part, Siason brings to the table more than 20 years of banking experience. He spent nearly 18 years with Citibank in the Philippines, Singapore and the Czech Republic. Most recently, he served as Citi's head of treasury and trade solutions for the Central Europe cluster, based in Prague. He has held a wide range of roles across credit, client coverage and franchise management, with a strong focus on enabling clients to become more global.

"Dino will play a leadership role in taking our corporate bank in the Philippines to the next level. His global client coverage and product expertise combined with his deep local market knowledge, will help further differentiate Deutsche Bank in the Philippines," said **Burkhard Ziegenhorn,** Deutsche Bank head of corporate bank for Southeast Asia and Australia.

B3

BIZ BUZZ: DA CONTINUES TO FILL UP TOP POSTS

FROM B1

"We are proud of our 48-year history in the Philippines and committed to growing in this increasingly important market. We're delighted that our strong platform has attracted high quality talent like Dino, and look forward to him leading our franchise from strength to strength in the Philippines," added **Kaushik Shaparia,** Deutsche Bank CEO for Emerging Asia and chief country officer for India. —DORIS DUMLAO-ABADILLA INQ

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

Date: JAN 24, 2024 Page: B6

Misamis Oriental port seen to support higher food production goals — DA

By CATHERINE TALAVERA

The construction of a new port in Misamis Oriental is expected to support the government's goal of increasing food production, as it is anticipated to enhance the trade capacity of the Mindanao region, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

"Lagonglong Port dovetails with the (DA's) push to boost agricultural production, ensure accessibility to affordable food, and achieve food security for our countrymen," Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said during the groundbreaking rites for the project.

Set to be completed in March 2025, the Lagonglong Port promises to increase trade capacity in Mindanao, enhance logistical capability in the region, and create new jobs, according to the DA.

The P4 billion project is a private commercial port development of Amadi MGT Terminals Inc.

The first phase of the project worth P1.4 billion will have an annual throughput capacity of 3.3 million metric tons of bulk cargo.

"The port will also have storage facilities and modern equipment to handle international and domestic cargo, including perishable goods," the DA said.

Laurel urged the construction of more projects similar to the Lagonglong Port, noting that they are expected to reduce the costs of feeds and fertilizers.

"We should build more ports like this. This is critical to the modernization of our country. This port, once finished, will reduce feed costs by at least 2.5 percent, or as much as five percent. It will reduce (the) cost of fertilizers also by five percent, or as much as 10 percent, depending on the price," Laurel said.

He said the port project would increase efficiency of transporting vital goods and provide storage facilities that would help maintain the quality of agricultural products and raw materials.

Once completed, the Lagonglong Port should spur the development of factories, processing plants and other value-adding facilities, Laurel said.

"I've seen that happen, and I've done it... in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, and other areas in the Western Pacific where we built ports," he added.

Laurel requested that Amadi provide the space for cold storage, ice stands, and silos for other agricultural products.

Meanwhile, in a separate statement yesterday, the DA announced the designation of former Bacoor City administrator Jerome Oliveros as undersecretary for special concerns and for Official Development Assistance-foreign aid/grants.

"As undersecretary for special concerns, Oliveros shall oversee the development and implementation of agricultural policies and projects aimed at improving the quality of life of disadvantaged and cultural community groups, children, youth, persons with disability, senior citizens and elderly," the DA said.

Malaya
Business Insight

Date: JAN. 24, 2024 Page: A3

P4B port to increase trade in Mindanao

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said the completion of the P4-billion Lagonglong Port in Misamis Oriental by March 2025 is expected to increase trade capacity in Mindanao and will enhance logistical capability in the region.

This in turn will create new jobs.

DA said the project is a private commercial port development of Amadi MGT Terminals Inc.

The agency said Amadi will spend P1.4 billion for the first phase which will have an annual throughput capacity of 3.3 million metric tons of bulk cargo.

The DA said the port will also have storage facilities and modern equipment to handle international and domestic cargo, including perishable goods.

"Lagonglong Port dovetails with the DA's push to boost agricultural production, ensure accessibility to affordable food, and achieve food security for our countrymen," said DA Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. in a statement.

"We should build more ports like this. This is critical to the modernization of our country. This port, once finished, I believe will reduce feed costs by at least 2.5 percent or as much as 5 percent. It will reduce cost of fertilizers also by 5 percent, maybe, or as much as 10 percent, depending on the price," Laurel added.

He added the port project will increase efficiency of transporting vital goods and provide storage facilities that will help maintain the quality of agricultural products and raw materials once finished.

Laurel said the facility will also spur the development of factories, processing plants and other value-adding facilities in the area.

Amid the development, Laurel said he also requested Amadi to provide the DA for space in the port where state-owned cold storage, ice stands and silos for other agricultural products can be put up.-*Jed Macapagal*

The Manila Times®

Date: 24 JAN 2024 Page: A7

DA Region 2 prepares for cloud seeding

TUGUEGARAO CITY: To get ready for the expected impact of the El Niño phenomenon this year, the Department of Agriculture (DA) office in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) is considering using cloud seeding to produce rain.

Dr. Roberto Busania, DA Region 2 technical director for operations and extension, said the DA Regional Field Office 2 (DA-RFO2) plans to conduct cloud seeding next month.

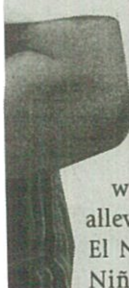
"In this activity, our target is to irrigate the corn and rice crops that are mostly planted by farmers," Busania said.

Region 2, considered one of the top producers of rice and corn in the country, includes the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino and Batanes.

Busania said that their agency has allocated P5 million to P7 million in initial funds for the cloud seeding activities.

"We have cloud condition experts who will tell if cloud seeding can be done in our target areas," he said.

Busania said the DA-RFO2 is also continuously coordinating with the National Irrigation Administration, municipal agriculturists, and the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Service Administration (Pagasa).



He said these agencies continue to guide farmers regarding weather conditions to alleviate the effects of the El Niño phenomenon. El Niño increases the likelihood of below-normal rainfall conditions which could lead to dry spells and drought to farmlands.

Meanwhile, Busania said he is hoping that a "zoning" planting scheme is implemented at the local government unit level in the region to avoid losses due to oversupply of produce which often results in wastage or dumping.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS + FEARLESS VIEWS
Date: 2 4 JAN 2024 Page: A7

Armed illegal fishers operate in Quezon waters, say groups

Alarm raised as BFAR confirms presence of big-time trawlers in Lamon Bay

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
@dtmallarijrINQ

LUCENA CITY—An environmentalist group expressed concern that big-time illegal fishermen that prawl the Lamon Bay in Quezon province have been hiring armed crew, causing tension to rise in the rich fishing ground.

"The situation is worsening. The crew of big-time illegal fishermen now [carry] weapons, making them dangerous. It is an outright disrespect to law enforcers," Jay Lim, project officer of Tanggol Kalikasan (TK), said in an interview on Monday.

He called on the authorities "to immediately act on the threat posed by illegal fishers not only against the environment but more so, against human lives, particularly law enforcers and small fishers."

Allan Castillo, director of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) in Quezon, confirmed Lim's information.

Castillo described illegal fishing activities by commercial fishers in Lamon Bay as "very rampant."

"As I observed, they do not intend to stop their illegal operations even if caught. They have criminal minds," Castillo said in a separate interview.

He added: "They are organized, well-funded and would do everything to prevent being caught and arrested."

Patrol

Castillo said they have requested their central office to provide them with modern monitoring, control and surveillance equipment or a bigger sea vessel for their patrol operation.

Illegal fishing activities in Lamon Bay were also being reported almost every day by the Quezon police.

The resource-rich Lamon Bay facing the Pacific Ocean covers towns in the southern part of Quezon. It borders the coastal towns of Atimonan, Gumaca, Plaridel, Lopez, Calauag and the island of Alabat which hosts the municipalities of Alabat, Perez and Quezon.

Like several other fishing grounds in the country, fish stocks had also been depleted in the bay due to massive commercial operations and illegal fishing activities.

Environmentalists and marginalized fishermen assailed the big-time illegal fishers for using "buli-buli" (modified Danish seine) along with the equally destructive "pangulong" (purse seine) and "taksay" (ring net) in their operations.

The government has banned buli-buli fishing since 2013 because it destroys corals, seagrass and traps, and eventually kills small fish.

A fisherman from Alabat Island confided to the Inquirer last week that small fishers like him have been "living dangerously" whenever they sail to fish.

'Like Chinese in WPS'

The more than 50-year-old fisherman, who requested anonymity for security reasons, said the big vessels of commercial fishers "are acting like Chinese in the West Philippine Sea."

"They often drive us away, threatening us with guns if we do not leave our traditional fishing ground for them alone," he said, adding that his daily catch was now barely enough to feed his family.

He said they have long been protecting Lamon Bay.

"If we learned that there are fellow fishermen who are resorting to destructive methods like dynamite fishing, we would immediately talk to him and order him to stop," he said.

Source of livelihood

The fisherman added: "The bay is our only source of income. We will not destroy it."

Blast fishing and other irresponsible fishing methods drove sea creatures out of Lamon Bay.

In 2015, a dead giant sperm whale was found stranded in Lamon Bay in Calauag town.

The deaths of the 40-ton-to 50-ton-sperm whale and the 55.7-foot-long whale were linked to illegal fishing in the area.

According to Castillo, some local governments along the coast of Lamon Bay, especially Perez, have also been initiating operations against illegal fishers.

"But they have limited resources and floating assets," he said.

Castillo said some local officials also condemned the illegal fishing activities on the bay, particularly inside their municipal water.

"But sad to say, we have yet to see real actions from them to stop illegal fishing," he said. INQ

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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WILL HELP INCREASE FOOD OUTPUT

₱4-B PORT PROJECT SEEN SPAWNING FACTORIES IN MISAMIS ORIENTAL

By Jordeene B. Lagare
@jordeenelagare

Various manufacturing businesses and related industries are expected to sprout around the P4-billion Lagonglong Port in Misamis Oriental, which its developer Amadi MGT Terminals Inc. intends to complete by March 2025.

The port developer last Jan. 21 broke ground on its private commercial port project in Lagonglong town, which is expected to increase trade activities in Mindanao, enhance logistical capability in the region and generate new jobs.

In a statement on Tuesday, Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr. said this "timely" port project will increase efficiency of transporting vital goods and provide storage facilities that will help maintain the quality of agricultural products and raw materials.

The Lagonglong Port, once completed, is expected to spur the development of factories, processing plants and other value-adding facilities upon its completion, Laurel said.

Amadi will earmark P1.4 billion for the first phase of the port project, which will have an annual throughput capacity of 3.3 million metric tons of bulk cargo.

According to the Department of Agriculture (DA), the port will also have storage facilities and modern equipment to handle international and domestic cargo, including perishable goods.

Tui Laurel estimates that the port project will reduce feed costs by at least 2.5 percent or as much as 5 percent, and the cost of fertilizers by 5 percent to 10 percent.

"I've seen that happen, and I've done it. In Papua New Guinea, Indonesia and other areas in the Western Pacific where we [working in the private sector] built ports," he said. "We should build more ports like this. This is critical to the modernization of our country."

The agriculture chief said they already requested Amadi to provide space for putting up cold storage, ice stands and silos for other agricultural products.

The DA previously unveiled plans to build cold storage facilities in the country to reduce postharvest losses and address oversupply of food items. For this year alone, the DA allotted P1 billion to construct four cold storage facilities, mainly at the Food Terminal Inc. (FTI) complex in Taguig City. This includes the P500-million chiller warehouse dedicated to vegetables and other high-value crops which would rise on a 1.3-hectare section of the FTI. It would be equipped with a processing plant and trading area.

Developing the warehouse forms part of the DA's plan to centralize all logistics management matters. INQ

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
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Date: 24 JAN 2024 Page: B2

IMPACT SEEN 'MINIMAL'

GOV'T KEEPS TAB AS ASF AFFLICTS HOGS IN OCCIDENTAL MINDORO

The Philippines logged new cases of African swine fever (ASF) in Occidental Mindoro, but the Department of Agriculture (DA) assured that the impact on local hog production would still be minimal.

The Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) confirmed on Monday that the animal disease had been detected in three Occidental Mindoro towns that supply hogs to Metro Manila and parts of Western Visayas.

Despite this, the DA regional field office in Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) said the latest incident would have a minimal impact on swine production.

DA spokesperson Arnel de Mesa said blood samples that had been sent earlier this month to BAI confirmed seven ASF cases in San Jose, five in Sta. Cruz and two cases in the municipality of Rizal as of Jan. 17.

BAI confirmed the presence of ASF cases in the province on Jan. 12, a few days after certain barangays in Sta. Cruz and San Jose had reported unusual number of pig deaths.

The agency is now keeping Naujan town under tight monitoring, particularly the movement of hogs within town limits, after detecting a recurrence of a positive case in the area.

"Pig production in the Oriental Mindoro towns of Naujan and Calapan are now being strictly monitored due to previous ASF cases while the town of Baco is being monitored for the virus," the DA said in a statement on Monday.

ASF cases were first detected in Oriental Mindoro late last year.

BAI, along with the concerned local government units, is conducting thorough surveillance, immediately taking out infected hogs and implementing preventive culling around affected areas.

A town is placed under red zone even if only one barangay shows cases of ASF, restricting any hog movement within the area, based on the DA's existing regulations.

Tighter mobility restrictions are also in place if two or more barangays show positive cases.

The DA is now awaiting requests from local government units to activate additional surveillance groups. It is also preparing to assist affected farmers for the indemnification of slaughtered hogs.

The DA pays P5,000 for each culled hog due to ASF, capping the financial assistance at 20 heads of pigs. —JORDEENE B. LAGARE INQ

PEOPLE'S JOURNAL
Everybody's Newspaper

Date: 24 JAN 2024 Page: 3

PBBM reactivates Task Force El Niño

TO ensure the country's readiness to fight the effects of the El Niño phenomenon, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has reactivated and reconstituted the Task Force El Niño through the issuance of Executive Order No. 53, increasing the resilience of communities and securing sufficient water supply, food security and public health and safety.

Under EO No. 53 issued on January 19, 2024, and signed by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, the Task Force El Niño is reactivated under the Office of the President. The Task Force will be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of National Defense and co-chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).

Among the members are the Secretaries of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DOST), Department of Agriculture (DA), Department of Health (DOH) and National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA).

The Office of Civil Defense shall provide administrative and technical support to the Task Force in the performance of its functions.

The Task Force is mandated to revise and update the Strategic El Niño National Action Plan, monitor the implementation of short and long-term solutions and programs identified in the Strategic El Niño National Action Plan, and coordinate with all concerned agencies in expediting the completion of all ongoing water infrastructure projects intended to cushion or mitigate the impacts of the dry spell not later than end of April 2024.

It is also tasked to coordinate with the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) in conducting massive information campaign on the El Niño phenomenon, and submit to the President, through the Office of the Executive Secretary, a monthly report on the implementation of the Order. *PCO*

Manila Standard

Date: JAN. 24 2024 Page: B4

Gov't to double Halal-certified items in 4 years

By Othel V. Campos

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Alfredo Pascual amplifies the agency's commitment to position the Philippines as the fastest-growing Halal hub in the Asia Pacific region during the launching of the four-year Philippine Halal Industry Development Strategic Plan at the World Trade Center.

THE government seeks to double the 3,000 Halal-certified products to 6,000 in the next four years to transform the Philippines into a Halal hub in the Asia-Pacific region.

Trade Secretary Alfredo Pascual said that under the Philippine Halal Industry Development Strategic Plan 2024-2028, the Philippines aims to attract P230 billion in foreign investments and generate 120,000 new jobs over four years.

"Our approach invites global participation in Philippine industry development and encourages major local manufacturers to produce Halal goods, thus meeting the rising demand at home and abroad," he said at the launch of the strategic plan Tuesday at the World Trade Center in Pasay City.

"We aim to enrich supermarkets shelves in foreign countries with Philippine Halal products. The confidence in our plan stems from undeniable statistics that tell a compelling story of growth and potential," Pascual said.

The DTI noted how the Muslim population of about 1.9 billion is projected to grow to 2.8 billion by year 2050.

The Philippines is positioning itself as a leading provider of Halal goods and services to partake of the two-fold increase in Halal trade to $7.7 trillion by 2025 from $3.2 trillion in 2015.

BusinessWorld

Date: 24 JAN 2024 Page: 4/S1

Philippines seeks to double halal industry output

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said it is aiming for a doubling in the halal industry's output with the launch of the Philippine Halal Industry Development Strategic Plan 2024-2028.

"Our strategic plan is to transform the Philippines into a premier halal hub in the Asia-Pacific over the coming four years," Trade Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual said at the launch event at the World Trade Center on Tuesday.

"The execution of our Halal Strategic Plan will see a doubling of our current 3,000 halal-certified products and services to 6,000, catering to both the burgeoning domestic demand and the global halal market," he added.

"Last year, we imported halal products worth $120 million, indicating a substantial market we could satisfy domestically," he added.

The plan also includes a P230-billion foreign-investment target and a 120,000 new-jobs target over the four years.

"Our approach invites global participation in Philippine industry development and encourages major local manufacturers to produce halal goods, thus meeting the rising demand at home and abroad," said Mr. Pascual.

"The confidence in our plan stems from undeniable statistics that tell a compelling story of growth and potential," he added.

Muslims currently account for 25% of the global population, or 1.9 billion people. This is projected to grow to 2.8 billion by 2050.

"The halal market is poised for remarkable growth, expected to reach a staggering $7.7 trillion by 2025, (against) $3.2 trillion in 2015," said Mr. Pascual. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

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STRONG LOCAL, GLOBAL DEMAND

PH EYES P230-B INVESTMENTS TO HELP DOUBLE HALAL GOODS LINEUP

By Alden M. Monzon
@AldenMonzonINQ

The government is planning to double the number of Sharia-compliant goods being produced in the country within the next five years, as part of its efforts to develop the industry under a newly launched national strategy for the halal industry.

Trade Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual on Tuesday said that the Philippine Halal Industry Development Strategic Plan 2024-2028 will double the current lineup of 3,000 certified products and services to 6,000, to cater to demand in both the domestic and global markets.

"To achieve this, we will foster collaborative efforts among government agencies, attract P230 billion in foreign investments, and, in the process, generate 120,000 new jobs over four years," Pascual said at the launch event held at World Trade Center in Pasay City.

Pascual said that, in the Philippines, there is a relatively low number of halal-certified goods, services and companies despite the country having the third largest Muslim population in Southeast Asia.

The trade chief said that in 2023, the Philippines imported $120 million worth of halal products considering that there is a huge domestic demand to be filled.

To spur the local halal industry's development within the five-year period, he said that the government's approach is to invite global participation in the development of the local industry.

Pascual also highlighted the potential of the halal industry, citing the huge Muslim population across the globe at approximately 1.9 billion—or a quarter of the global population—that is projected to grow to 2.8 billion by the year 2050.

"In line with this demographic trend, the halal market is poised for remarkable growth, expected to reach a staggering $7.7 trillion by 2025," Pascual added.

Further, the trade chief said that a halal task force, which was formed recently, has already had several key accomplishments completed in just four months.

These include the introduction of P300 million in investments from The Netherlands into businesses registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority and the Board of Investments.

The task force is also busy with the ongoing halal certification of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in partnership with the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Mindanao's Ministry of Trade.

Pascual also cited the task force's active role in the agreement that was signed between the Department of Trade and Industry and the financing firm DK P.O. Fulfillment Company Inc. to provide non interest funding to MSMEs. INQ

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS
Date: 24 JAN 2024 Page: A17

INITIAL AGRI DAMAGE PLACED AT P130M

FLOOD-HIT DAVAO DE ORO NOW IN A STATE OF CALAMITY

By Ryan Rosauro and Germelina Lacorte
@InqNational

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The province of Davao de Oro has been placed under a state of calamity due to the massive destruction wrought on its communities by heavy rains brought about by the shear line last week.

Nearly 200,000 people in the province were affected by floods and landslides in four days of continuous rains, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) said.

At least 600,000 people had been affected by the floods that also inundated communities and farms, and damaged numerous roads and bridges in the Davao region.

The region is composed of the provinces of Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental and Davao Occidental; and the independent highly urbanized Davao City.

The neighboring Davao de Oro and Davao Oriental are bearing the heavy brunt of the shear line that dumped heavy rains on Mindanao's eastern seaboard last week.

Davao de Oro's calamity declaration was approved last Saturday by the Sangguniang Panlalawigan led by Vice Gov. Jayvee Tyron Uy, upon recommendation of the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (PDRRMC) chaired by Gov. Dorothy Gonzaga.

Rapid assessment

The PDRRMC noted that a rapid damage assessment counted 51,140 families, or 182,653 persons, were affected throughout the province. More than P130 million in agricultural production of about 3,700 crop and fish farmers were lost to floods and landslides that damaged 5,000 hectares of fields.

Gonzaga said the estimate of damage could go up as reports from the municipalities flow in.

Davao de Oro province recorded 12 dead, 11 of them from the landslide that occurred in Mt. Diwata, Monkayo town and another one in Maragusan town.

Joseph Randy Loy, the provincial disaster risk reduction and management officer, said the calamity declaration paves the way for the release of funds needed to assist those who were affected.

In Davao Oriental, the PDRRMC on Tuesday recommended a calamity declaration throughout the province to also free up its quick response funds to attend to the havoc wrought by heavy rains in its communities and allow the imposition of price control on basic commodities.

Some 63,377 families in Davao Oriental were affected by the floods and landslides that damaged many roads and bridges, as well as flood control dikes.

Power still out

A rapid assessment estimated that some P112.21 million in agricultural production were lost; about P160,000 in livestock, P106.44 million in crops and P5.61 million in fisheries.

As of Tuesday, several communities are still cut off from the local power distribution system as the lines are still being repaired in portions of Governor Generoso, San Isidro, Lupon, Tarragona, Caraga, Manay and Cateel towns, and in Mati City.

Gov. Niño Sotero Uy said he expects approval of the calamity declaration by provincial legislators who will meet on Wednesday.

A state of calamity had already been declared by the municipal governments of Caraga, Tarragona, Cateel, Governor Generoso and Lupon.

Regional figures

The death toll from the recent landslides and flooding in the Davao region rose to 16 as two more persons were reported to have died in Mati City, Davao Oriental and another one in Don Marcelino town of Davao Occidental.

According to the Office of the Civil Defense (OCD), the number of people affected by floods and landslides in the Davao region rose further to 606,483 (or 134,879 families), as local government units continued their assessment, taking into account those areas that were difficult to reach.

Of those affected, a total of 3,495 families, or 12,725 persons, are still staying in evacuation centers.

Initially, the OCD placed at P68.09 million the estimated damage to agriculture in the region and at P26.87 million the damage to infrastructure.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development and local governments have given out some P49.58 million in assistance to affected communities. INQ

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Halal devt plan to generate P230B investments, 120K jobs

BY IRMA ISIP

Mainstreaming Halal. The Philippine Halal Industry Development Strategic Plan 2024-2028 targets to double Halal output to 6,000 products and services. (DTI Photo)

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) eyes to generate P230 billion investments and 120,000 jobs in the local halal industry over the next four years.

These are among the goals of the Philippine Halal Industry Development Strategic Plan 2024-2028 launched yesterday by the DTI.

In his speech, DTI Secretary Alfredo Pascual, chair of the Philippine Halal Board, said the strategic plan aims to position the Philippines as the fastest-growing Halal hub in Asia-Pacific.

Pascual said the plan also targets to double Halal output to 6,000 products and services within the timeframe.

"Our approach invites global participation in Philippine industry development and encourages major local manufacturers to produce Halal goods, thus meeting the rising demand at home and abroad," Pascual said.

Aleem Guiapal, project manager of the the Halal Industry Development of the DTI, said the agency is taking a progressive and developmental role rather than a regulatory function in pushing local Halal.

Guiapal also reported the Halal Board has passed a resolution recognizing foreign-accredited Philippine Halal certification bodies to further drive the growth of Philippine Halal exports.

Currently,. only Philippine products certified by Philippine-accredited Halal certifying bodies are allowed for export.

The Halal market is poised to reach a staggering $7.7 trillion by 2025, a more than twofold increase from 3.2 trillion in 2015.

The Philippines' Halal exports to Islamic Countries have been steadily growing, particularly in Malaysia, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Iran,

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Qatar and Kuwait.

In 2021, the top Philippine exports to leading Halal markets were fresh bananas ($45 million), pineapple products ($25 million), beauty and cosmetics ($7.3 million), carrageenan ($2.9 million), medicaments ($2 million), crude coconut oil ($942,000), dried mangoes ($97,000), and calamansi ($34,000).

The DTI has a created a Special Halal Task Force the past year.

So far, around P300 million in investments from the Netherlands were committed to Philippine Economic Zone Authority and the Board of Investments on Halal.

Halal certification of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) is ongoing in partnership with the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Mindanao's Ministry of Trade.

The DTI has earlier signed an agreement with DK P.O. Fulfillment Company Inc. where the latter will provide non-interest financing services to MSMEs.

Malaysia-based fast-food chain Marrybrown Franchise will open its first store in the country.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas has granted the first Islamic Banking unit license to an incumbent conventional bank in June 2023, with an Islamic banking branch in Cotabato to start its operations in the first quarter of this year.

Last November 29, the Philippines issued, for the first time, a $1 billion Sukuk or Sharia-compliant bonds with a tenor of 5.5 years, which was oversubscribed nearly five times, demonstrating pent-up interest from investors.

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PHL aims to double Halal output to serve local and global market

BY ANDREA E. SAN JUAN
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THE Philippines is aiming to double its local Halal output from its current 3,000 Halal-certified products and services to 6,000 to cater to both domestic demand and global market, according to Trade and Industry Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual.

In his speech during the launching of the Philippine Halal Industry Development Strategic Plan 2024-2028, Pascual said, "We aim to enrich supermarket shelves in foreign countries with Philippine Halal products."

"The execution of our Halal Strategic Plan will see a doubling of our current 3,000 Halal-certified products and services to 6,000, catering to both the burgeoning domestic demand and the global Halal market," the Trade chief said.

To achieve this, Pascual said the agency would foster collaborative efforts among government agencies, attract P230 billion in foreign investments, and in the process generate 120,000 new jobs over the next four years.

The Trade chief said the approach invites global participation in Philippine industry development and encourages major local manufacturers to produce Halal goods, thus meeting the rising demand at home and abroad.

Pascual explained that halal encompasses "more than just culinary provisions." He said it is an "expansive" ecosystem that spans Islamic finance, Muslim-friendly travel, modest fashion, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and media and recreation aligned with Islamic principles.

"The appeal of Halal products also goes beyond religion. Many non-Muslim individuals worldwide are drawn to Halal products for their known safety, cleanliness, hygiene, and health benefits," he said.

However, the Trade chief recognized that the "foremost challenge" we face is "the relatively low number of Halal-certified goods, services, and companies in the Philippines."

Moreover, Pascual noted that despite having Southeast Asia's third-largest Muslim population, the Philippines's Halal production lags behind that of non-Islamic countries like Singapore and Thailand.

"The foremost challenge we face is the relatively low number of Halal-certified goods, services, and companies in the Philippines," Pascual said, adding that last year alone, the country imported Halal products worth $120 million, indicating a "substantial" market that the country could satisfy domestically.

Other challenges in the Halal industry in the country, Pascual added, are the tendency of government agencies to operate in silos, the gaps in the Halal value chain, and the lack of awareness and visibility of halal products, among others.

Despite "successful" partnerships, Pascual said there's a need for "enhanced" inter-agency collaboration to unify roadmaps and strategies for Halal development.

On the gaps that must be addressed in the country's halal value chain, the Trade chief said, "We require a comprehensive industry-wide effort encompassing all stages from production to consumption."

Further, Pascual stressed that there is a need to improve awareness and visibility of Halal products.

"We aim to make it easier for all consumers, including the growing number of Muslim tourists, to find and access Halal products," he noted.

Calling it a "sunrise industry," Pascual gave an overview of the Halal industry in the global landscape.

"The world's Muslim population, currently standing at approximately 1.9 billion, constitutes around 25 percent of the global population. This number is projected to grow to 2.8 billion by the year 2050," the Trade chief said.

Moreover, he said that in line with this demographic trend, the Halal market is poised for "remarkable" growth, expected to reach $7.7 trillion by 2025—a more than twofold increase from $3.2 trillion in 2015.

"With 2025 just around the corner, these figures do more than just mark time—they underscore the growing significance of Halal products and services," Pascual said.

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BusinessMirror
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editorial

Govt urged to leverage import fees to boost PHL coffee industry

THE Philippines has been a net importer of coffee since 1997, according to an industry roadmap prepared by the government. The country's current output is simply not enough to keep up with increasing demand of households and cafes for coffee. Local farms could only supply 15 percent of the country's annual requirement, while the rest is imported.

Official government data showed that the value of the country's coffee imports last year reached $129.2 million. Of the coffee products imported by the Philippines in 2023, the not roasted or decaffeinated form topped the list, with the value of shipments amounting to $105.54 million. The value of imports was higher by nearly 7 percent, which means that this product was more expensive in 2023 compared with the average quotation in 2022.

In 2022, the value of coffee imports nearly doubled to $120.56 million, from the year-ago figure of $68.94 million. The surge in prices could be attributed to the reopening of economies and the dramatic spike in demand for the commodity. More cafes and restaurants reopened as more people got vaccinated against Covid-19, prompting governments around the world to ease quarantine restrictions.

As the country's coffee sector remains unable to meet local demand, expect the Philippines to continue importing this commodity. With the operations of restaurants in full swing and the opening of more cafes, coffee imports will rise in the coming years. Even with the disruption caused by the pandemic, coffee drinking remained as a popular social activity, particularly among younger consumers.

This now makes it imperative for the government to focus on growing the local coffee sector and displacing part of the country's imports. Reducing imports could encourage young Pinoys to consider planting a crop that is now being enjoyed by many of their peers. Planting this commodity, however, requires a lot of patience and also government support.

Fortunately for the state, it would not have to scrounge around for funds to bankroll initiatives aimed at increasing coffee output. The Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. pointed out that there is an existing fund created by Republic Act 8800 or the Safeguards Measures Act. ***(See, "Use import fees to improve coffee industry, govt told," in the BusinessMirror, January 22, 2024).*** Under RA 8800, part of the fund should be earmarked for improving local agricultural industries that are "affected by increased imports" following the liberalization of nearly all local commodities after the Philippines joined the World Trade Organization in 1995.

The Philippines may not be able to regain its status as a net coffee exporter in the medium-term, but the government should at least start planting the seeds for its development. Based on official government data, coffee is mostly planted in Mindanao, which accounts for nearly 84 percent of the country's annual production. There is a lot of room for growth in the Philippine coffee sector, but government must work in tandem with the private sector and make judicious use of available resources for improving the sector's performance.

Pilipino Star
NGAYON
Diyaryong disente ng masang intelihente

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Urban farm sa QC, tuloy ang pagdami

QC ASENSO

Ni Ate JOY BELMONTE

MALAYO na ang narating ng ating programang urban farming.

Sinimulan natin ito noong 2010, noong ako'y Vice Mayor pa lang, sa isang simple at maliit na lugar malapit sa mga restaurant sa Quezon Memorial Circle. Makalipas ang apat na taon, nabigyan ito ng mas malaking espasyo sa QMC.

Lalo pang pinag-ibayo ang programa noong panahon ng pandemya nang makita natin ang pangangailangang palakasin ang food security sa ating lungsod.

Fast forward sa 2023, sa unang bahagi ng taon ay mayroon na tayong 754 urban farms sa buong Quezon City. Umakyat pa ito sa 1,026 noong Disyembre.

Natutuwa tayong makita ang mabilis na pagdami ng ating urban farms dahil malaki ang maitutulong nito para mabigyan ng sapat na pagkain ang ating mga QCitizens.

Bukod pa riyan, nakapagbigay rin ang ating urban fams ng kabuhayan sa tinatayang 25,000 QCitizens na nagtatrabaho bilang urban farmers.

Ipinagpapasalamat natin ang pagtaas ng bilang ng urban farms sa lungsod sa City Ordinance No. SP-2972 na ating inaprubahan noong 2020. Sa ordinansang ito, hindi na pagbabayarin ng Idle Land Tax ang mga may-ari ng lupa kung gagamitin nila ang kanilang ari-arian para sa urban agriculture nang hindi bababa sa tatlong taon.

Natutuwa tayo na nakatulong ang ordinansa para mahikayat ang mga may-ari ng idle lands na gamitin ang kanilang lupain para sa urban agriculture. Sa halip nga naman na nakatiwangwang, may makukuha pa silang pakinabang kapag tinaniman ito ng iba't ibang klase ng gulay.

Para makinabang sa benepisyong hatid ng nasabing ordinansa, dapat ang idle land ay gagamitin para lang sa urban farming nang hindi bababa sa tatlong taon, at kailangang magkaroon ng ani na puwedeng gamitin para sa per-

(Sundan sa pahina 5)

QC ASENSO... *Mula pahina 4*

sonal na pangangailangan o para sa publiko.

Ang mga kwalipikadong lupain ay bibigyan ng sertipikasyon ng Quezon City Task Force on Food Security at Office of the City Assessor kapag nakapasa sa assessment.

Umaasa tayo na marami pang may-ari ng bakanteng lupa ang sasama sa hangaring ito at ipagagamit ang kanilang ari-arian para sa urban agriculture. Malaki ang maitutulong nito para mapalakas pa ang ating food security sa mga susunod na taon.

BusinessWorld
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Robusta coffee hits highest in at least 16 years

NEW YORK — Robusta coffee futures on ICE hit their highest in at least 16 years on Monday amid tight supplies in top producer Vietnam and export delays, while London cocoa steadied off recent record highs.

COFFEE: March robusta futures settled up $92 or 2.9% at $3,220 a metric ton, having earlier hit $3,229 — the highest since Jan. 2008 when the current form of the contract first started trading.

Continued attacks by Iran-aligned Houthis in the Red Sea are boosting prices by slowing down shipments of robusta coffee from Asia to Europe, dealers said, while farmers in Vietnam remain reluctant to sell.

ICE robusta coffee speculators raised their net long position by 9,486 lots to 43,722 lots as of Jan. 16.

March arabica coffee rose 3.8% at $1.9225 per pound (lb), hitting the highest so far this year at $1.9315.

ICE arabica coffee speculators raised their net long position by 4,073 contracts to 29,253 in the week to Jan. 16.

COCOA: March London cocoa fell 0.8% to 3,744 pounds a ton, after setting a record high of 3,798 pounds on Friday.

London cocoa speculators raised their net long position by 6,053 lots to 65,467 lots as of Jan. 16.

Data last week also showed the cocoa grind, a measure of demand, in North American, Europe, and Asia fell in the fourth quarter. However, the falls were less pronounced than expected, dealers said, given the extent of the price rise.

BMI, a unit of Fitch Solutions, said it expects demand to continue to fall in the 2023/2024 season, significantly enough to temper the rise in cocoa prices.

March New York cocoa settled down $18 or 0.4% to $4,565 a ton, having earlier matched Friday's 46-year high of $4,607.

SUGAR: March raw sugar settled down 0.07 cent or 0.3% at 23.50 cents per lb, after hitting a five-week high on Friday.

Dealers said the weather in Brazil sugar areas is being watched closely, with rains so far below the average.

March white sugar was little changed at $663 a ton. — ***Reuters***

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Soybeans, corn up

SINGAPORE- Chicago soybean futures edged higher on Tuesday, with short-covering supporting prices, although expectations of bumper production in South America curbed gains.

Corn prices rose on support from lower Brazilian crop outlook, and wheat firmed as well.

The most-active soybean contract on the Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT) was up 0.2 percent at $12.26-1/4 a bushel, having gained almost 1 percent on Monday.

Wheat rose 0.2 percent to $5.97-1/2 a bushel and corn edged 0.1 percent higher to $4.46 a bushel.

"Soybean prices are firming after hitting lows last week," said one Singapore-based oilseed trader. "There is some buying interest at these levels from investors."

Commodity funds were net buyers of CBOT soybean, soyoil, wheat and corn futures contracts on Monday and net sellers of soymeal futures, traders said.

On Monday, gains in US crude oil futures lent support to the soybean complex due to soyoil's role as a feedstock for biofuel.

Soybeans' rally is being capped, however, by forecasts of record supplies from South America's top producers, including Brazil and Argentina.

Brazil's 2023/24 soybean harvest had reached 6 percent of the planted area, as of last Thursday, agribusiness consultancy AgRural said on Monday, up 3.7 percentage points from the previous week and above the 1.8 percent seen in the year-ago period.

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Russian wheat export prices, shipments down

A crane loads wheat grain into the cargo vessel Mezhdurechensk before its departure for the Russian city of Rostov-on-Don in the port of Mariupol, Russian-controlled Ukraine. *(Reuters Photo)*

MOSCOW- Russian wheat export prices continued to decline last week following a drop in global markets, while shipments also fell amidst challenging weather conditions, analysts said.

The informal restriction of the export price by the Russian Ministry of Agriculture also remains one of the influencing factors, they said.

The price of 12.5 percent protein Russian wheat scheduled for free-on-board (FOB) delivery in the second half of February to the first half of March was $238 per metric ton, down $4 from the previous week, the IKAR agriculture consultancy reported.

According to IKAR, last week's drop in prices on world markets overlaid the price dynamics, while weather conditions continue to restrain shipments.

The situation in the Red Sea has not yet had a significant impact on Russian grain exports, said IKAR head Dmitry Rylko.

The Sovecon agriculture consultancy pegged the same class of wheat at $240-243 a ton FOB compared to last $243-246 a week ago.

The global wheat market dropped sharply at the beginning of the week and has been gradually recovering since, the agency noted.

Last week, Egypt's state grains buyer bought 300,000 metric tons of Russian wheat again, as in two previous tenders, at $265 FOB (270-day payment delay).

Russia exported 0.65 million tons of grain last week, down from 0.75 million tons the previous week. The exports included 0.58 million tons of wheat (0.64 million tons a week ago), Sovecon wrote, citing port data.

Sovecon lowered its January wheat export forecast by 0.2 million tons to 3.6 million tons versus 3.9 million tons a year ago, Sovecon wrote.

"Russian outstanding wheat export (contractual volumes registered by exporters at National Mercantile Exchange (NAMEX) tumbled this week to 1.9 million tons (the lowest since early November) from 3.2 million tons a week ago," Sovecon noted.

"This could support the popular 'no demand' bearish narrative but we think it's a neutral/bullish story. Russia's sales are modest not because there is zero global demand but because AgMin is trying to limit sales at current prices," it added.

"The problem is current slow sales are unlikely to be fully offset later because of infrastructure bottlenecks implying that the market could be estimating total 2023/24 exports too optimistically."

Meanwhile, Romania's Black Sea port of Constanta recorded its highest grain exports in 2023 thanks to a surge in shipments from Ukraine and ongoing European Union-funded infrastructure projects, the port authority told Reuters on Wednesday.

The port shipped 36 million metric tons of grain last year, it said, up 50 percent from the previous year.

Ukrainian grain accounted for roughly 40 percent of the total, or 14 million tons, up from 13.0 million at the end of November and from 8.6 million in the whole of 2022.

Ukraine is one of the world's biggest grain exporters, and Constanta has become Kyiv's largest alternative export route since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, with grains arriving by road, rail and barge across the Danube.

But its transit volumes have fallen since July when Russia began repeatedly striking its river ports that lie across the Danube from European Union and NATO member Romania.

In August, Ukraine created a shipping corridor from its own ports which hugs the western Black Sea coast near Romania and Bulgaria, shortly after Russia withdrew from a 2022 UN-brokered Black Sea grain export deal and threatened to treat all vessels as potential military targets.

Earlier this week, it said it has exported 10 million tons of agricultural goods through the corridor.

Romania aims to boost its transit capacity for Ukrainian grain to 4 million tons per month, and is currently upgrading rail and road infrastructure in and around the port. *-Reuters*