

DOST gives 30K food packs to quake-hit areas in Mindanao

MANILA -- The Department of Science of Technology (DOST) will give 30,000 packs of ready-to-eat food to earthquake victims in Mindanao, Secretary Fortunato dela Peña said on Friday.

The packs contain DOST-developed products, such as rice porridge, smoked fish rice meal, and BigMo (bigas/ rice - mongo) curls which is a snack that could apparently provide 12 percent of recommended energy and 11 percent recommended protein to children.

"To date, 2,490 arroz caldo (rice porridge), 504 smoked fish rice meal, and 150 BigMo were turned over to the province of Cotabato. They (DOST-12) will be sourcing out 150 packs of complimentary food from Sultan Kudarat University, for distribution," dela Peña said in a message to the Philippine News Agency.

He added that DOST-12 needs help from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council for the delivery of 30,000 packs of ready-to-eat food from the DOST-Industrial Technology Development Institute (ITDI) in Bicutan to Region 12.

The DOST will give 30,000 packs of ready-to-eat food in earthquake-hit Mindanao. These packs include rice porridge, smoked fish rice meal, and BigMo (bigas-mongo) curls, all developed by the DOST. (Photo courtesy of Secretary Fortunato dela Peña)

The ITDI developed the ready-to-eat smoked fish rice meal, according to dela Peña.

The rice porridge, called "Pack of Hope", was also developed by the ITDI. It was packed in a retort pouch and has a shelf life of at least one year.

Magnitude 6.6 and 6.5 earthquakes rocked Tuluhan, North Cotabato on Tuesday and Thursday, respectively.

Duterte in Thailand for 35th Asean summit

MANILA -- President Rodrigo Duterte, who is set to join his fellow Southeast Asian leaders at the 35th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) Summit and Related Summits in Thailand on November 2-4, "arrived safely" in Thailand on Friday night, Malacañang said.

"We confirm that President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has arrived safely on Bangkok, Thailand tonight (Friday), November 1, to begin Day One of his participation at the 35th Asean Summit and Related Summits," Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo said in a statement.

This is Duterte's fourth visit to Thailand. The first visit was in November 2016 to pay his respects to the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej; the second, in March 2017 for an official visit; and the third, last June for the 34th Asean Summit.

Upon his arrival at the Royal Thai Air Force in Bangkok at about 8:52 p.m, Friday, the President was welcomed by Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, Deputy Chief of Protocol Vosit Vorasup, Philippine Ambassador to Thailand Mary Jo Bernardo-Aragon, and the Philippines' Chief Protocol Robert Borje, Panelo said.

Thailand chairs this year's Asean Summit, which will focus on advancing partnerships for sustainability.

Panelo said this year's Asean theme is a "subject matter close to President Duterte."

"He (Duterte) himself believes in -- and has publicly articulated in numerous occasions the importance of -- promoting respectful friendships and responsible partnerships, as well as meaningful cooperation, to realize his vision of inclusive growth and sustainable development for the Philippines," he said.

Leaders to discuss

South China Sea disputes, other regional issues

Duterte is expected to attend two important engagements in Bangkok, the working dinner and a retreat with Asean leaders, wherein they are expected to talk about pressing regional issues in a more intimate setting.

He is also expected to hold bilateral and pull-aside meetings with several Asean leaders and other world leaders on the sidelines of the conferences.

In a press statement on Friday, the Palace said the President would join other Southeast Asian leaders and dialogue partners "to advance Asean's community-building agenda, aimed at ensuring greater peace, security, and prosperity in the Asia Pacific."

Malacañang noted that Duterte and his fellow Southeast Asian leaders would tackle regional issues, such as "developments in the South China Sea and other security concerns, particularly terrorism, illicit drug trafficking, and other transnational crimes."

It added that the Asean leaders would exchange views on pressing issues, among them the "trade tensions, geopolitical shifts, and the Fourth Industrial Revolution."

In line with this year's Asean theme, the President and the nine other Asean leaders would explore ways to "further promote inclusive and sustainable development and address the challenges posed by climate change, marine pollution, and other environmental issues," the Palace said.

Malacañang said the Chief Executive would also attend one-on-one summits with China, the United

States, Japan, the United Nations, and India "to examine the current status and future direction of dialogue partnerships."

It further said that key strategic issues affecting the region's security and growth prospects would be discussed at the Asean Plus Three Summit with Japan, China and South Korea.

Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo, in a separate statement earlier Friday, said Duterte's participation in the Asean summit and related summits would help "further enhance economic growth within a peaceful environment, and regional and global stability in the years to come."

The Palace noted that there would be more than 40 outcome documents anticipated to be signed at the end of the 35th Asean Summit.

"They will serve as blueprints for the region's collective pursuit of a more inclusive, equitable, and sustainable Asean Community," it said.

Part of the official Philippine delegation are Panelo; secretaries Martin Andanar (communication), Teodoro Locsin Jr. (foreign affairs), Carlos Dominguez III (finance), Ramon Lopez (trade), Rolando Bautista (social welfare), Alfonso Cusi (energy), and Ernesto Perina (socioeconomic planning); Philippine Permanent Representative to Asean Noel Servigon; and Bernardo-Aragon.

Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea, through Special Order 1182 signed by Duterte on October 30, has been designated as the government's officer-in-charge to "take care of the day-to-day operations in the Office of the President and oversee the general administration of the Executive Department." (PNA)

Retrieval ops for 2 bodies in Davao del Sur stopped

MANILA -- Authorities announced on Friday that the retrieval operations for the two bodies that were buried in a landslide after a strong quake hit Magsaysay, Davao del Sur will resume on Tuesday (Nov. 5).

In a Radyo Pilipinas' report, Civil Defense 11 spokesperson Franz Irag said they need to reset the operation to a later date due to the threat of risking the lives of rescuers to recover the bodies of Gilbert Superales at Miggy Attic.

"[We will resume operations] Until we can make sure that it is safe to conduct operations," Irag added.

Superales and Attic were reportedly fixing the waterline of their neighborhood in Sitio Kabuhuan, Barangay Upper Bala on October 29 when the magnitude 6.6 earthquake hit and triggered a landslide that buried them.

Aison Attic, Miggy's brother, who was earlier reported miss-

ing was already found with a fractured leg by rescuers on October 30.

Irag said there are still aftershocks of the quake which made it more difficult for rescuers who have to contend with rains.

Meanwhile, the air asset of the Philippine Air Force is already on standby for use during the operation.

In previous reports, Davao del Sur Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office safety officer George Garcia that they need air assistance to conduct retrieval operations in the mountains.

The series of strong quakes that jolted Mindanao in a span of days this week has claimed at least 16 lives and injured 403 people, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

The victims in Davao Region and Soccsksargen died due to landslides, falling and collapsing debris and cardiac arrests resulting from the earthquakes. (PNA)

Airport guard surrenders pouch with US dollar bills

MANILA -- A security guard at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) on Thursday surrendered to authorities a pouch with US dollar bills he found at the arrival conveyor area of the airport.

Sanzebal Mastul found the pouch at one of the carousels at NAIA Terminal 1.

"A remarkable amount of cash" is inside the pouch, according to the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA).

The MIAA, refused to disclose the amount, as this would be among the details that would be asked from possible claimants.

There was no ID card in the bag, it added.

On Friday, the MIAA said Mastul headed to the paging section when he found the pouch. No one came after several announcements.

Mastul later surrendered the pouch to the airport's Lost and Found section.

BI stops 7 human trafficking victims at NAIA amid Undas rush

MANILA -- Bureau of Immigration (BI) officers at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) have stopped seven victims of human trafficking syndicates from going out of the country amid the surge of passengers during the Undas holidays.

In a statement Friday, BI port operations division chief Grifon Medina said the victims were intercepted in separate incidents this week.

He reported that five of the victims were intercepted at the NAIA Terminal 3 on Wednesday as they were about to board their flight to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia where they would stay prior to their illegal deployment as factory workers in Poland.

The two other two passengers were stopped on Tuesday as they were about to board a flight to Hong Kong en route to their final destination in the United Arab Emirates where they were hired as household service workers (HSWs).

"These syndicates are mistaken if they thought they could succeed in bringing their victims out of the country while our immigration officers are very busy servicing thousands of passengers who are vacationing here and abroad during the Undas break. We were prepared for them, hence these interceptions," Medina said.

Ma. Bernadette Catipay, head supervisor of the BI's travel control and

enforcement unit (TCEU) at NAIA 3, said the victims were either caught with spurious documents or were hired by illegal recruiters.

The Poland-bound factory workers were allegedly hired by a recruitment agency that was suspended by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) for violating the latter's rules and regulations.

On the other hand, the two Hongkong-bound passengers were caught with fake overseas employment certificates and labor assistance center clearances which they presented to make it appear that they are legitimate overseas contract workers.