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TRADE & INDUSTRY
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DTI intensifies price monitoring in the market nationwide



Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Ramon M. Lopez, together with other DTI officials, conducts a surprise price monitoring visit at the San Roque Supermarket Comembo and Unimec Comembo in Makati City on 28 May 2018.

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) **Secretary Ramon M. Lopez** conducted a surprise price monitoring at San Roque Supermarket Comembo and Unimec Comembo in Makati City on 28 May 2018 to intensify monitoring on establishments that are taking advantage of consumers.

This is in compliance with the order of **President Rodrigo Roa Duterte** to DTI for it to take immediate steps in the monitoring of stores to guard against profiteering and ease consumer woes.

Sec. Lopez announced during the flag raising ceremony on 28 May that the Department is revving up its price monitoring of products and goods in supermarkets and grocery stores nationwide.

“We will intensify our campaign in monitoring the prices of products and goods in stores, especially in groceries and supermarkets. We will widen our coverage here in Metro Manila and all the regions in the country. We’ve been doing this since TRAIN Law was implemented last January,” Sec. Lopez said.

DTI has increased the number of groceries, supermarkets, and stores being monitored from 400 to 610 at the National Capital Region (NCR), with additional 600 stores in other regions. The Department also has an online price monitoring system called E-Presyo, a mobile application, wherein consumers can check the prevailing prices of basic necessities and prime commodities (BNPCs) that are being monitored by DTI. Also available in the DTI website, e-presyo serves as a price guide for consumers in buying their BNPCs.

DTI Regional Offices, with the involvement of local government units (LGUs), are also conducting their respective price checks of the BNPCs to protect the consumers against overpricing and profiteering. Sec. Lopez mentioned the Department's suggestion to the Departments of Agriculture (DA) and Interior and Local Government (DILG) to consider placing suggested retail prices (SRPs) to agriculture products that will be set accordingly depending on the supply and demand per week.

DTI also intends to tap *sari-sari* stores with the *Suking Tindahan* Project wherein participants who will commit to sell within SRP ranges for BNPCs will be registered and given a badge of DTI *Suking Tindahan Tanda ng Sulit at Resonableng Presyo*. The aim of the project is for community stores to sell BNPCs within the SRP level.

Based on the Department's monitoring, Sec. Lopez said, groceries and supermarkets are following the SRPs on BNPC. The basic necessities being monitored by DTI are canned fish and other marine products, processed milk, coffee, laundry soap, water in bottles and containers, and locally-manufactured instant noodles. The primed commodities, on the other hand, are flour, processed, and canned pork, processed and canned beef and poultry meat, vinegar, fish sauce, soy sauce, toilet soap, paper, school supplies, cement, clinker, GI sheets, hollow blocks, construction supplies, batteries, electrical supplies, light bulbs, and steel wires.

Sec. Lopez shared that it is a challenge for the Department to catch the profiteers and those who are actually violating the law.

"Everybody has been complying with the SRP based on our monitoring. Once we catch a violation, the manufacturer would immediately correct their pricing and comply with the SRP once their attention is called by the DTI," he said.

This price monitoring of the Department is in accordance to the Consumer Act of the Philippines (Republic Act No. 7394) which states that "it is the policy of the State to protect the interests of the consumer, promote his welfare, and to establish the standards of conduct for business and industry."

"I encourage our consumers to buy their basic necessities at the groceries and supermarkets so that they can avoid overpricing from convenience stores. We are also suggesting to the Department of Agriculture (DA) to consider putting SRPs to agriculture products that will be set accordingly to the supply and demand per week. I would also need the cooperation of DTI employees to immediately report to the office whenever they see a price violation," he said.

Accompanying Sec. Lopez during the surprise market visit were **Competitiveness and Ease of Doing Business Group (CEODBG) Undersecretary Rowel S. Barba**, **Consumer Protection Group (CPG) Assistant Secretary Ernesto V. Perez**, **Fair Trade Enforcement Bureau (FTEB) Director Domingo R. Tolentino Jr.**, **Consumer Protection and Advocacy Bureau (CPAB) Director Ronnel O. Abrenica**, and **Assistant Director Lilian G. Salonga**.