# DoE solicits green energy bids for 2,000 MW

THE Department of Energy (DoE) said it is inviting companies to supply 2,000 megawatts (MW) of renewable energy (RE) in the first round of its Green Energy Auction Program (GEAP).

In a Notice of Auction released on Tuesday, the DoE said the power will be supplied to Luzon, the Visayas, and Mindanao at the following volumes: 1,400 MW, 400 MW, and 200 MW respectively.

For Luzon bidders, the total capacity for auction is 900 MW of solar energy, 360 MW wind, 80 MW hydro power and 60 MW biomass.

The breakdown for the Visavas is 120 MW biomass, 260 MW solar, and 20 MW wind. For Mindanao, the target volumes are 100 MW solar, 50 MW biomass, and 50 MW hydro.

The GEAP aims to boost RE as a source of energy, with RE generators participating in an auction for their output.

The auction will be administered by the DoE's Green Energy Auction Committee.

RE facilities are deemed eligible if they have been in operation and were built in compliance with the RE law. They must have no legal issues and have no power purchase agreements or power supply agreements with any distribution utility (DU) that may conflict with the agreed delivery dates.

The GEAP features the Green Energy Tariff, which influences the commercial value of power generated from qualified RE facilities, and sets a benchmark price for DUs under an Opt-in Mechanism.

With the Opt-in mechanism, the DU can procure power from

the GEAP pool of winning bidders to reduce Feed-in Tariff-All charges to the end-users.

The rules also require the DoE to design an auction specific to geothermal and impounding hydropower facilities participating in the bid.

"The DoE has determined that the competitive bidding process under the GEAP is one of the best ways to accelerate the development of renewable energy systems and the promotion and commercialization of its applications, encourage free and active private sector participation and investment in all energy activities, and provide adequate capacity to meet demand, including reserve requirements," according to the guidelines.

The government is targeting a 35% RE share of the energy mix by 2030. - Marielle C. Lucenio

### Small fishermen urge government to enforce poaching laws

AN ASSOCIATION of small fishermen, Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA), said the government needs to enforce poaching in order to deter illegal exploitation of Philippine fisheries.

"Foreign fishermen are taking all our fish, especially in areas like the West Philippine Sea. It is an insult that we have to import fish from abroad when it comes from our own waters," PAMALAKAYA Vice Chair for Luzon Bobby C. Roldan said in a

He said fish being imported from China and Vietnam, primarily galunggong (round scad) and mackerel, were likely taken from Philippine waters.

"We are most likely importing balikbayan (returnee) fish. We are fully aware that the countries where we are going to import fish from are the same countries that frequent our territorial waters in the West Philippine Sea. This is an insult to us as an archipelagic country as we might be importing fish that came from our very own fishing grounds," Mr. Roldan added.

Mr. Roldan, a Zambales fisherman, said galunggong is mostly caught in the West Philippine Sea and off Batangas, Mindoro, and

PAMALAKAYA also called for price controls to stabilize rising fish prices.

"At P250 per kilogram retail price, galunggong is no longer a 'poor man's fish.' This unreasonable pricing is mainly caused by government's failure to regulate private fish traders who secure their profits by jacking up the wholesale prices and eventually push up retail prices to unaffordable levels," the organization's Chairman Fernando L. Hicap

"The unregulated middleman system in the fish trade results in manipulation of farmgate and market prices which are detrimental to small fishers and ordinary consumers," he

Mr. Hicap proposed that instead of imports, the Department of Agriculture should directly procure from fisherfolk and set a standard retail price.

"Instead of imports, which are harmful to the fishing industry, the government should intervene by imposing a price ceiling on fish that (is) reasonable and beneficial to local producers, retailers, and consumers. This effort would preempt greedy wholesalers and traders from manipulating the price of galunggong and other fishery products that serve as primary protein sources for many Filipinos," Mr. Hicap said.

On Jan. 17, the DA said it had issued certificates of necessity to import 60,000 metric tons of small frozen pelagic fish, in order to ease rising prices and augment supply in typhoon-hit areas. – Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

#### JOB VACANCY

1 OPERATIONS MANAGER

- Qualifications:

  MUST BE COLLEGE GRADUATE OR ANY BACHELOR'S
- WITH GOOD ORAL AND WRITTEN COMMUNICATION
- CAN WORK WITH MINIMAL OR WITHOUT SUPERVISION;
   EXHIBITS A SENSE OF URGENCY WHEN NECESSARY
- CAN WORK UNDER PRESSURE
   AT LEAST 5YRS. WORK EXPERIENCES

Hanul World Wide Inc. No. 196 Sto. Domingo St., Brgy. Balingasa, Quezon City Email: hanulworldwide121@gmail.com

#### JOB HIRING

1 MARKETING MANAGER

- MUST BE COLLEGE GRADUATE OR ANY BACHELORS
- CAN COMMUNICATE TO KORFAN CLIENTS **EXHIBITS A SENSE OF URGENCY WHEN NECESSARY**
- AT LEAST 2YRS. WORK EXPERIENCES

JK Tourism Development Inc. No. 227 Cluster G Bldg., D Macapagal Blvd., Blue Bay Walk, Pasay City

# PEZA, other IPAs bat for RCEP treaty approval

INVESTMENT PROMOTION agencies (IPAs) including the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) said the Senate needs to ratify the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) trade agreement, citing the need to participate in the bloc in order to better integrate the Philippine economy with those of major trading partners.

PEZA, the Authority of Freeport Area of Bataan, the Aurora Pacific Economic Zone and Freeport Authority, the Clark Development Corp., the Cagayan Economic Zone Authority, the John Hay Management Corp., the Poro Point Management Corp., the Regional Board of Investments-Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority, the Subic-Clark Alliance for Development Council, and the Zamboanga City Special Economic Zone Authority issued a statement on Tuesday batting for ratification of the RCEP treaty.

"The RCEP Agreement promotes greater openness, creates a more business-friendly environment, encourages closer integration of economies, and provides a more stable and predictable rules-based system of trade," they said.

On Sept. 2, President Rodrigo R. Duterte signed the RCEP agreement, which is now awaiting the Senate's

The trade agreement took effect on Jan. 1 this year and is now in force with members Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, China, Japan, and New Zealand. On Feb. 1, South Korea is also set to implement the trade deal.

The Senate has until Feb. 4 to ratify RCEP before the chamber takes a break for the election campaign.

According to the investment promotion agencies, the Philippines cannot afford to delay its participation, or to stay away from the trade deal, because other countries in the region which are members will be deemed more attractive investment destinations.

"In this respect, the Philippines' immediate participation in RCEP is important as it will allow firms in the country, particularly those geared towards exports, to benefit from the lowering of trade barriers, and improved market access for goods and services in fourteen export destinations," they said.

They said RCEP will benefit Philippine companies by lowering import tariffs, making imported raw materials cheaper. The treaty is also expected to improve the business environment by making trading rules more transparent and friction-free.

"The RCEP region remains a strong bastion of economic activity and opportunity as trade and investment shift to Asia. Thus, given the extent of economic activity in the region, the Philippines cannot afford to delay or not participate in this free trade deal when all our neighbors in Southeast Asia are reaping the advantages of the agreement," they said.

Separately, the Tuna Canners Association of the Philippines (TCAP) and the Canned Sardines Association of the Philippines (CSAP) also batted for Senate concurrence, saying that the trade deal will benefit their industries.

TCAP and CSAP Executive Director Francisco Buencamino said in a statement that participation in the RCEP will give the industries equal footing with Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Malaysia.

"The canned tuna industry stands to gain from RCEP via the expected increase in domestic demand resulting from the improved economic performance of key sectors such as manufacturing, the service sector and even agriculture due to access to markets as well as investment," Mr. Buencamino said.

"A growing export base for the sardine industry will help keep prices for the domestic market more manageable and allow the category to continue to grow. The industry and its suppliers provide direct employment to at least 80,000 to 100,000 workers and impact around 500,000 individuals directly," he added.

In a statement, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines, Inc. (JCCIPI) also called for RCEP's ratification.

"The ratification of the RCEP would provide an immense boost to the country's economic activity and further strengthen the intra-region free trade system, especially as a recovery mechanism from the impact brought by the pandemic which has made international cooperation on trade more important than ever," JCCIPI said. — **Revin Mikhael D.** Ochave

#### Building materials wholesale price growth up 5.4% in Nov.

WHOLESALE PRICE growth of building materials in the National Capital Region (NCR) hit a nearly three-year high in November, the Philippine Statistics Authority

The Construction Materials Wholesale grew 5.4% year on year in November, against 4.7% print in October and 0.8% in November 2020.

It was the highest growth rate since December 2018, when the CMWPI rose 5.7%.

The index reflects large purchases by major construction companies and property developers, and serves as a leading indicator for future activity by those industries.

In the year to date, growth in the Metro Manila CMWPI averaged 3.0%, against the year-earlier expansion of 1.3%.

November growth was led by the prices of fuels and lubricants, which accelerated to 38.3% year on year from 33.3% in October; concrete products and cement (3.0% from 1.2%); plumbing fixtures and accessories/waterworks (1.8% from 1.1%); plywood (2.6% from 2.1%); reinforcing and structural steel (8.8% from 8.4%); electrical works (7.2% from 6.9%); sand and gravel (3.0% from 2.7%); and doors, jambs and steel casements (2.5% from

Year-on-year price growth slowed down in hardware (2.6% from 2.8%); lumber (2.8% from 3.1%); and tileworks (minus 1.8% from minus 0.1%).

"Primary factors... would have been the looser restrictions due to lower infections before the 2021 holidays and the general perception that it was now safer to go out, supporting more demand particularly construction-related products and services," UnionBank of the Philippines, Inc. Chief Economist Ruben Carlo O. Asuncion said in an e-mail.

"The reduced restrictions (allowed builders) to buy and push through with construction plans. This may also be true not only for retail sales, but more so for wholesale ones involving bigger construction projects," Mr. Asuncion added.

Metro Manila and its surrounding areas were under general community quarantine (GCQ) Alert Level 3 between Nov. 1 and 15. The GCQ was eased to alert level 2 between Nov. 15 and 30, during which the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) Omicron variant was first detected.

Mr. Asuncion expects CMWPI growth in December to be higher, then slowing down

"(T)his will be short-lived and may unfreeze come February especially if the government eventually shifts to Alert Level 2 (from Alert Level 3) with the decline of the Omicron surge in the NCR," Mr. Asuncion added. - Ana Olivia A. Tirona

# House Bill regulating hire motorcycles wins second reading passage

A BILL setting registration requirements and safety parameters for motorcycles for hire was approved on second reading by the House of Representatives on Tuesday.

House Bill 10571 or the proposed Motorcycles-For-Hire Act gives the Department of Transportation (DoTr) to regulate the industry, including setting guidelines for which types of motorcycle are eligible for hire, according to proceedings of the chamber's plenary ses-

The bill gives the Land Transportation Office the authority to determine whether motorcycles are roadworthy. Meanwhile, the Land Trans-

portation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) and local government units, will have the authority to issue hire-motorcycle franchises in cities, with the numbers to depend on a route plan to be developed by the DoTr.

The measure also gives the LTFRB the power to set fares and other fees operators can charge.

A Senate counterpart bill was approved last year at the committee level and is awaiting secondreading approval. - Jaspearl Emerald G. Tan

#### Well-milled rice prices fall in five regional centers

THE Philippine Statistics Authority said the average retail price of well-milled rice decreased in five trading centers between Dec. 1 and 5, which it calls the first phase of December.

Prices fell by P0.13 to P1.52 per kilogram, compare with Nov. 15-17, or the second phase of No-

They were down P0.13 at P42.83 in the National Capital Region (NCR), P0.75 at P49 in Batangas City, P0.95 at P38.47 in Kidapawan City, P1.26 at P44.78 in Calapan City and P1.52 at P39.80 Iloilo City.

Of the trading centers reporting gains, average prices rose P0.37 to P38.56 in Legazpi City, P0.51 to P39.50 in Pagadian City, P1.96 to P42.70 in Digos City, and P0.96 to P40.57 in Butuan City.

The retail price of bone-in pork rose P5.00 to P21.67 per kilogram in five trading centers.

Prices rose P5.00 to P285 in Cabanatuan City, P11.27 to P371.35 in Legazpi City, P15.65 to P303.42 in Calapan City, P15.00 to P308.89 in the NCR, and P21.67 to P216.67 in Cebu City.



Prices declined by P0.50 to P179.50 in Cagayan de Oro City, P2.50 to P342.50 in Batangas City, P8.17 to P207.70 in Butuan City, and P17.86 to P232.14 in Digos City.

Galunggong (round scad) prices rose in six trading centers. They rose P3.16 to P234.74 in the NCR, P8.31 to P178.70 in Iloilo City, P11.11 to P266.67 in Calapan City, P14.88 to P156.28 in Kidapawan City, P25 to P220 in Tuguegarao City, and P50 to P190 in Cagayan de Oro City.

Prices dropped P1.56 to P191.63 in Butuan City, P10 to P215 in Cabanatuan City, P17.50 to P140 in Pagadian City, and P40 to P160 in San Fernando City. -Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson

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### Aboitiz, SM group companies ink urban agriculture deals with DA

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it is entering into an urban agriculture partnerships with TriMerA Integrated Farm, SM Prime Holdings, Inc. unit SM Super Malls, Aboitiz Foundation, Inc. and Pilmico Foods Corp.

On Jan. 24, Secretary William D. Dar signed the memorandum of agreement with the four companies, the DA said in a statement. The department said the urban farms are intended to bolster food security.

TriMerA farm, located in Nueva Ecija, will develop rabbit farms for the program and offer training for participants. DA offices like the Bureau of Plant Industry, the Bureau of Animal Industry, and the National Livestock Program will provide starter kits, other materials and education support in coordination with the Agricultural Training Institute.

SM Supermalls, under a separate agreement, will establish food gardens, which are being positioned as a source of "safe, accessible, and affordable food to households and communities in urban areas," the DA said.

The gardens will also generate income for project participants, who will undergo training and capacity enhancement from the DA.

Aboitiz Foundation and Pilmico will also promote gardens in urban areas and other sites on the urban periphery, as well as launch livelihood programs. They will supply starter kits to participants.

Also being contemplated are projects for egg and swine production, as well as aquaponic farming, with similar support from the companies. - Luisa Maria Jacinta C.