Blame for GSP+ loss squarely on gov't — NGO

THE looming forfeiture of European trade privileges should not be blamed on European Union (EU) "bullying" but rather on the Philippines' failure to address human rights issues flagged by the bloc, according to Trade Justice Pilipinas, an organization promoting equitable trade.

The potential loss of access to the EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+) scheme "was conditioned on the Philippines' fulfillment of obligations under 27 Human Rights and Labor Rights conventions. It therefore is clear from the start that in order to continue to benefit from the scheme the Philippine government must abide by its commitment to ensure effective implementation of its human rights and labor rights

obligations," Trade Justice Pilipinas Co-Convenor Joseph F. Purugganan said in a statement.

"The blame should not be placed on the European Parliament or any other institution raising concerns over the failure to comply, but should fall squarely on the Duterte administration for not addressing these concerns," he added.

Mr. Purugganan said the EU's flagging of human rights issues should not be framed by the Philippine government as

"The program is crystal clear. These special trade preferences, given unilaterally by the EU, are conditioned upon effective implementation of human rights and labor rights conventions. Raising these human rights concerns on the part of the Parliamentarians should not be seen as bullying but rather an effort to push compliance by the Philippines of conditions it agreed upon in

the first place," Mr. Purugganan said. "The Duterte administration has forfeited these trade preferences by failing to address the worsening human rights situation," he added.

The European Parliament adopted a resolution that highlighted the human

rights situation in the Philippines. It also warned of withdrawing access and privileges enjoyed by the Philippines under GSP+ if the issues are not addressed.

> Trade Secretary Ramon M. Lopez said that the Philippines has always re-

complied with the conventions required for GSP+ access.

sponded and

"The Philippines has been very cooperative with the EU and has repeatedly

addressed these concerns in existing dialogue mechanisms. The Philippines remains compliant with the 27 international core conventions on human rights, labor, environment and good governance to enjoy GSP+ treatment," Mr. Lopez said.

Currently, the Philippines still has access to GSP+, a unilateral trade agreement that offers zero-tariff entry for more than 6,200 Philippine products shipped to the EU.

The trade agreement began in Jan. 2014 and is set to expire on Dec. 31, 2023.

Philippine products admissible under GSP+ include tuna, pineapple, bicycles, textiles and garments and footwear. -Revin Mikhael D. Ochave

La Union P4.7-billion bypass 80% complete

THE Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said on Thursday that a P4.7-billion bypass road project offering an alternate route to the Manila North Road for travelers from Bauang, San Fernando City, and San Juan, La Union is now 80.12% complete.

"A total of P4.697 billion is required to fully complete the whole stretch of the bypass road, of which, P2.026 billion (was) released from 2018 to 2022," the department said in a statement.

"The bypass road project based on total released funds managed to reach an accomplishment rate of 80.12%," it added.

The 22.2-kilometer Bauang-San Fernando City-San Juan Bypass Road project is expected to decongest traffic along the Manila North Road section between Barangay Payocpoc, Bauang and Barangay Taboc, San Juan.

The project, which was started in 2018, has two sections: the 7.8-kilometer Bauang Section and the 14.4-kilometer San Fernando City-San Juan Section.

It is also expected to serve as a link to other major roads such as the Bauang-Baguio Road, San Fernando-Bagulin Road and San Juan-San Gabriel Road that lead to Kapangan, Benguet.

The department said the project includes the construction of 18 bridges, with three already completed, one under construction, and 14 more awaiting funding.

"We understand that a properly-realized road network plays a vital role in nation-building. That is why the DPWH vows to continue providing muchneeded road infrastructure to promote economic development all over the country," Acting Public Works Secretary Roger G. Mercado said.

For this year, the department said it hopes to open 2.64 kilometers for the Bauang Section, as well as the construction of the Bauang Bypass Bridge spanning 895.9 meters, while simultaneously opening another 1.87 kilometers of road for the San Fernando City-San Juan Section.

"The rest of the bypass road project is already programmed for implementation in 2023 and 2024, with funding earmarked at P2.671 billion," it noted.

"When completed, travel time between the towns of Bauang and San Juan will be cut in half from the current one hour to just 30 minutes," the department added.





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QUEZON PROVINCE (LUCENA CITY AND TAYABAS) BETWEEN 3:30AM AND 6:30AM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT LUCENA 423LCN

Portion of Lucena Diversion Road from near Quezon Ave. to and including University Site Village, Metropolis Lucena Subd. and Manuel S. Enverga University Compound; Dito Base Station, Empire Oil Integrated Mfg. Corp., Ouan's The Farm Resort, Quezon Poultry & Live Stock Corp., New Lucena City Hall Complex, Uni Farm Inc., Manuel S. Enverga University Foundation, Primewater Infrastructure Corp., Lucena Grand Terminal and Total Gas Station in Bgys. Mayao Silangan, Mayao Kanluran, Ibabang Dupay, Ilayang Dupay and Gulang-Gulang in Lucena City.

Portion of Ilayang Dupay Road from Lucena Diversion Road to and including Grand Alliance Subd. and Purok Ibaiw in Bgy. Ilayang Dupay, Lucena City. Portion of Mayao Kanluran Road from Iglesia Ni Cristo – Lokal ng Kanlurang Mayao to and

including Calmar Homes North Subd. in Bgy. Mayao Kanluran, Lucena City. Portion of Ilang-Ilang St. from Lucena Diversion Road to and including Don Victor Ville Subd. and Purok Camia in Bgy. Mayao Silangan, Lucena City.

Portion of Bgy. Pandakaki including Sitio Petang in Tayabas

REASON: Replacement of poles, line reconductoring work and relocation of facilities along Lucena Diversion Road in Bgy. Gulang-Gulang, Lucena City, Quezon Province.

MANILA (STA. ANA); MANDALUYONG CITY; AND MAKATI CITY (CARMONA AND KASILAWAN) BETWEEN 5:00AM AND 5:10AM AND THEN BETWEEN 9:01AM AND 9:10AM - THE

WHOLE OF CIRCUITS STA. ANA 13VN AND 18VN

Portion of Pedro Gil, Old Panaderos and New Panaderos Sts. from Meralco – Sta. Ana substation in Sta. Ana, Manila to Rt. Rev. G. Aglipay St. in Bgy. Pag-Asa, Mandaluyong City including F. Roxas, San Roque and Embarcadero Sts. in Sta. Ana, Manila.

Portion of Rt. Rev. G. Aglipay St. from New Panaderos St. in Sta. Ana, Manila to and including A. T. Reyes, P. Gomez, A. Luna, Star, Monday, Friday, Sunday, P. Burgos, M. Mateo, Nanirahan, Pananalig, J. P. Rizal, F. Roxas, Mendoza, Coronado, Saniboy, Clara Castañeda, Doña B. Yangco, 1st, 2nd and 3rd Sts.; Venus St. in Dreamland Townhomes Subd.; and Merryland Village in Bgys. Pag-Asa, Burol, Poblacion, Hagdang Bato Itaas, Mabini - J. Rizal, Hulo, Vergara and Namayan in Mandaluyong City. Portion of M. Roxas and E. Pascua Sts. from La Torre St. in Sta. Ana, Manila to and including Guizon, A. Mendoza, Del Pan, Cagayan, P. Nuñez and P. Domingo Sts. in Bgys. Carmona

and Kasilawan in Makati City; Del Pan, Cagayan, Callejon 1 to 8, Del Pilar, Jose Syquia, Abra, edel, Zamora, Silang, Lamayan, Sta. Clara, Havana, Leiva, Calderon, Kasarinlan, Azucena, Isabel, Hernandez, Revellin and Kalayaan Sts. in Sta. Ana, Manila Portion of Felix Y. Manalo and J. Posadas Sts. from E. Jorge St. to and including Roads 1 to 8 in Punta – Bagong Sikat; Cristobal, Kalahi, A. Cruz and J. Esguerra, Sts. in Sta. Ana, Manila.

REASON: Replacement of facilities and testing work inside Meralco - Sta. Ana

BULACAN (BOCUAE AND BALAGTAS)

BETWEEN 12:00NN AND 5:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT SAOG 412SAO Intercity Ricemillers Industrial Compound in Bgy. Wakas in Bocaue; and Bgy. San Juan

REASON: Line maintenance work inside Intercity Ricemillers Industrial Compound, Bgy.

MONDAY AND SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28 AND MARCH 6, 2022

CAVITE (DASMARIÑAS CITY; IMUS CITY; AND GEN. TRIAS CITY)

BETWEEN 8:00AM AND 8:30AM (MON., 02/28/22) AND THEN BETWEEN 4:00PM AND 4:30PM (SUN., 03/06/22) - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT ABUBOT 32XZ

Portion of Don Placido Campos Ave. from Goldenville I Subd. to and including Bgys. Malagasang II-F & G in Imus City; Goldenville II Subd., Greensborough Subd., Dexterville Classic Subd., Dasmariñas Townsville Subd., Sunndale Homes and Sunrise Hills Subd. in Bgy.Sabang,

Mary Cris Complex in Boy. Pasong Camachile 2. Gen. Trias City REASON: Maintenance work inside Meralco - Abubot substation

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2022

MANILA (MALATE AND STA. ANA)

BETWEEN 8:45AM AND 8:59AM AND THEN BETWEEN 3:01PM AND 3:15PM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT MALATE 24J; AND PORTION OF CIRCUIT MALATE 17J

Portion of Estrada St. from near Taft Ave. to Lemery St. including Alejo Aguino and Dian Portion of Don Pedro St. from Arellano Ave. to Dian St. in Sta. Ana.

Portion of Taft Ave. from Estrada St. to and including BDO - Vito Cruz Branch. in Malate REASON: Preventive maintenance and testing work inside Meralco - Malate substation.

TAGUIG CITY (STA. ANA)

BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 2:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT TAGUIG 46ZL Portion of Pulong Kendi I and II Roads from near Liwayway St. to and including

Pinagbuklod Subd. Phase 2, Prudence Subd., Bagong Sikat Compound, Romantic Compound, Rodriguez Compound, Villa Filomena Compound and Purok 3; Masaya and T. Santos Sts.

REASON: Replacement of poles and line reconductoring work along Pulong Kendi Road in Bgy. Sta. Ana, Taguig City.

QUEZON CITY (NOVALICHES) BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 2:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT NOVALICHES 48YJ

Portion of San Dionisio St. from Prinsipe Tupaz St. to and including Goldmine Interior Subd., Kingdom One Subd. and Doña Rosario Heights Subd. in Bgys. Nagkaisang Nayon and

REASON: Installation of facilities along Prinsipe Tupaz St. in Dona Rosario Subd., Novaliches Proper, Novaliches, Quezon City.

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MARCH 1, 2022

LAGUNA (SAN PABLO CITY; NAGCARLAN; AND RIZAL) BETWEEN 10:30PM AND 11:00PM (MON., 02/28/22) AND THEN BETWEEN 7:00AM AND 7:30AM (TUE., 03/01/22) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT SAN PABLO II 42WJ

Along Gen. Miguel Malvar St. from A. Mabini St. to and including P. Gomez, Inocencio Portion of J. P. Rizal Ave. from Zamora St. to Inocencio Barleta St. in San Pablo City

Portion of A. Bonifacio St. from P. Burgos St. to and including Trece Martirez, P. Gomez, P.

Zulueta and Marcelo H. Del Pilar Sts. in San Pablo City proper
Portion of M. Magcase St. from P. Gomez St. to Alimario St. in San Pablo City proper. Portion of Werner P. Schetelig Ave. and San Pablo – Rizal – Nagcarlan National Road from Gregorio Antonio Luna Road in San Pablo City proper to Flying V Gas Station in Bgy. Silangan Napapatid, Nagcarlan including Bgys. Banago, Abo, Bukal, San Francisco, Buboy, Malaya and Silangan Ilaya in Nagcarlan; Bgys. Sto. Angel, San Lorenzo, San Buenaventura, San Diego, San Lorenzo, San Lucas I, Sta. Catalina, Sta. Isabel, Concepcion and San Pablo City proper in San

REASON: Maintenance work inside Meralco - San Pablo II substation

TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2022

LAGUNA (ALAMINOS)

BETWEEN 10:00AM AND 1:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT SAN PABLO II 425WJ St. Joseph Subd. along Maharlika Highway in Bgy. Poblacion

Line reconstruction work along Maharlika Highway in Bgy, Poblacion.

CAVITE (IMUS CITY AND KAWIT)

BETWEEN 11:00PM (TUE., 03/01/22) AND 4:00AM (WED., 03/02/22) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT BACOOR 412WX

Portion of Bisita and Gen. Yengco Sts. from Iglesia Filipina Independiente - Parish Of Saint Michael The Archangel in Bgy. Manggahan-Lawin, Kawit to Medicion II-A Barangay Hall including Toclong II St.; Samala Subd. and Angel Village in Bgys. Medicion II-A, II-C & II-D and Toclong II-A

& II-B in Imus City; Cmdr. B. Ilano, Bituka Manok and M. Dulog Sts.; Bangalan Subd., Allenville Townhomes Subd. Phases 1 & 2, Caimol Compound, Salud Subd., Bajada Compound and A. B. Papa Compound in Bgy. Manggahan-Lawin, Kawit. REASON: Replacement of poles and line reconductoring work along Gen. Yengco St. in

Bgys. Medicion II-A and II-C in Imus City, Cavite. BETWEEN 11:30PM (TUE., 03/01/22) AND 4:30AM (WED., 03/02/22) - PORTION OF

CIRCUIT NAIA-3 425VX Portion of NAIA Road from Petron Gas Station to and including Aboitiz Air Transport Corp.

and INAEC Aviation Corp. REASON: Line reconductoring work along NAIA Road in Pasay City.

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2022

LAGUNA (MAGDALENA; LILIW; MAJAYJAY; NAGCARLAN; RIZAL; AND SAN PABLO CITY)

BETWEEN 12:01AM AND 12:30AM AND THEN BETWEEN 6:00AM AND 6:30AM - THE WHOLE OF CIRCUIT BOTACAN 41D

Portion of F. T. San Luis Ave. from Bgy. Cigaras to Liliw – Magdalena Road including Bgys. Baanan, Bungkol, Burlungan, Tipunan, Malaking Ambling, Munting Ambling, Poblacion, Bucal, Ilayang Butnong, Malinao, Ibabang Butnong, Salasad, Balanac, Sabang, Ilog and Buenavista in

Portion of Liliw - Magdalena Road from Bgy. Calumpang to and including Bgys. Ilayang

Sungi, Luquin, Novaliches, Oples, Ibabang Sungi, Ilayang San Roque, Ibabang San Roque, Silangang Bukal, Kanlurang Bukal, Ilayang Palina, Ibabang Palina, Poblacion, Ilayang Taykin, Ibabang Taykin, Bungkol, Mojon, Calumpang, Tuy-Baanan and Palayan in Liliw. Portion of Majayjay - Lucban Road from Liliw - Majayjay Road to and including Bgys.

Ibabang Banga, Ilayang Banga, May-It, Talortor, Coralao, Poblacion, Pangil, San Roque, Oobi, Panglan, Munting Kawayan, Sta. Catalina, Olla, Suba, San Isidro, Malinao and Bucal in Majayjay. Portion of Nagcarlan - Calumpang Road from Sta. Cruz - Calumpang Road to Nagcarlan

Rizal Road including Bgys. San Francisco, Bukal, Abo, Kanluran Lazaan, Silangan Napapatid, Banago, Taytay, Silangan Ilaya, Silangan Lazaan, Malinao, Sinipian, Buboy, Banilad, Maiit, Talahib, Sulsuguin, Alumbrado, Sabang, Palayan, Yukos, Bambang, Oples, Palina, Poblacion, Alibungbungan, Balimbing, Balinacon, Bangkuro, Calumpang, Malaya, Sta. Lucia, Talangan, Silangan Kabubuhayan and Kanluran Kabubuhayan in Nagcarlar The whole town of Rizal.

Portion of Nagcarlan – Rizal Road from Bgy. Sto. Angel to and including Bgys. San Antonio I and Sta. Maria Magdalena in San Pablo City.

REASON: Preventive maintenance work inside Meralco – Botocan substation.

THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2022

QUEZON PROVINCE (SAN ANTONIO AND TIAONG) BETWEEN 9:00AM AND 2:00PM - PORTION OF CIRCUIT SAN PABLO II 45WJ

Portion of Pury - Balat Atis Barangay Road from Batangas - Quezon Provincial Road in Bgy. Pury, San Antonio to and including Bgys. San Francisco and Behia in Tiaong; Bgys. Balat Atis Pulo and Pury in San Antonio.

REASON: Installation and replacement of facilities; and line reconductoring work in Bgy. Balat Atis, San Antonio; and Bgy. San Francisco, Tiaong in Quezon Province

SUNDAY AND MONDAY, MARCH 6 - 7, 2022

CAVITE (GEN. TRIAS CITY)

BETWEEN 4:00AM AND 5:00AM (SUN., 03/06/22) AND THEN BETWEEN 3:00AM AND 4:00AM (MON., 03/07/22) - PORTION OF CIRCUIT AMADEO 62AMA - GATEWAY 62WP - FCIE 65WB - SMC San Miguel - Purefoods Hormel Compound along Governor's Drive in Sitio De Fuego,

Bgy. San Francisco.

REASON: Relocation of facilities along Crisanto Delos Reyes Ave. in Bgy. Biclatan, Gen.



compete with foreign rice imports, with 42 provinces involved in the rollout of high-yield seed. PhilRice Executive Director

bales, said in a statement.

John C. de Leon said the institute is working closely with LGUs, other agencies, seed growers' cooperatives and associations, and

100% adoption eyed

LOCAL GOVERNMENT units

(LGUs) are being counted on to

ensure 100% adoption of high-

yield rice seed this year, funded

by the Rice Competitiveness En-

hancement Fund (RCEF)-Seed

planted to traditional seed has

been steadily dropping from 16%

in 2018, to 5% in 2019 and 0.06%

in 2021, according to the Phil-

ippine Rice Research Institute

to the increase of high-quality

seed utilization in our province.

We commit to achieve 100%

high-quality seed utilization this

2022," Crisostomo R. Rabaca,

provincial agriculturist of Zam-

The RCEF seed program is a

six-year initiative to help farmers

"RCEF greatly contributed

In Zambales, the total area

Program.

(PhilRice).

for high-yield rice seed

legislators. "For the second year in a row, our rice farmers (achieved) record production of 19.96 million metric tons of palay (unmilled rice)," he said.

The seed program's impact on overall rice production for the dry and wet seasons in 2021 was estimated at between 15% and 23%, while its impact on production at targeted provinces was about 38% to 59%, PhilRice said.

In the dry season, 1.65 million bags of seed were distributed to more than 600,000 farmers. During the wet season, 1.76 million bags were distributed to more than 700,000 farmers.

The total area planted with RCEF-issued seed was 466,578 hectares in the dry season and 572,203 hectares in the wet season.

The RCEF is a component of Republic Act No. 11203 or the Rice Tariffication Law, which sets aside P10 billion a year to increase the productivity of rice farmers. — Luisa Maria Jacinta