

# Marcos orders DPWH to focus on infra projects aiding agriculture

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., who is also his own Agriculture Secretary, has called on the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) to focus on infrastructure projects that benefit food security, Public Works Secretary Manuel M. Bonoan said.

“The President has instructed the prioritization of infrastructure that would aid in the food security program of the government amid rising inflation, as well as the interconnectivity of regions and convergence programs with other agencies,” the DPWH said in a statement on Thursday, citing Mr. Bonoan.

Being his own agriculture secretary allows “things (to) move quickly” in response to global developments, Mr. Bonoan said, noting that the agriculture industry has been facing “severe” problems.

The “infrastructure projects under DPWH that would help farmers are farm-to-market roads in convergence with the Department of Agriculture (DA),” the DPWH said.

In June, the DPWH reported that it completed farm-to-market road projects in Cabanatuan City and Gabaldon and General Tinio, all in Nueva Ecija.

“The concreting of the local roads required a combined

amount of P12.6 million funded through the General Appropriations Act (GAA) of 2022,” the department said in a statement.

The paving project “was made possible through the convergence program of the DPWH and the Department of Agriculture with funding sourced from the 2021 (General Appropriations Act),” it added.

Mr. Bonoan said he will continue to pursue the big-ticket projects under the Build, Build, Build Program of the former administration “as instructed” by Mr. Marcos.

The DPWH hopes to “continue to tap the private sector for the country’s road network improve-

ment through Public-Private Partnership program.”

In April, DPWH officials from the previous administration said they had completed 12 out 119 flagship projects.

The department had projected the completion of seven more big projects by June 30 and 12 more by December, including the P45.29-billion Southeast Metro Manila Expressway Project and the P75-billion MRT-7 of San Miguel Corp. (SMC).

Mr. Bonoan was SMC Tollways’ president and chief executive officer when he was tapped by Mr. Marcos to head the DPWH. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

## WB says only 60% of 4Ps recipients in 2020 were among the poorest

THE World Bank (WB) said the Philippines’ cash transfer program, designed to aid the poorest 40% of the population, has seen beneficiaries from outside that category creep in gradually, to the point where only 60% of recipients in 2020 would have qualified under the original eligibility criteria.

“In 2009, almost 92% of (the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program) beneficiaries belonged to the bottom 40% of income distribution. However, this share has declined over time and, by 2020, during the pandemic, only slightly over 60% of... household (beneficiaries) are from the bottom 40%,” World Bank Senior Economist for Social Protection and Jobs Global Practice Yoonyoung Cho said in a presentation with the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) on Thursday.

She was referring to the government’s cash transfer program, which is also known as the 4Ps.

Ms. Cho called for a cleanup of the Philippines’ beneficiary list to ensure that payments intended for the most vulnerable members of the population do not leak to unauthorized recipients.

“There should be a clean beneficiary and citizens database which facilitates better targeting (or) identification of beneficiaries in the time of crisis,” she said, calling the distribution of aid in the Philippines “quite inefficient.”

She added that “prioritizing those in the greatest need enhances fiscal efficiency, meaning greater impact for peso spent.”

When beneficiaries are effectively targeted, she backed the use of multiple financial service providers for disbursements to “further enhance greater access and convenience for beneficiaries.”

“(These) delivery systems can be enhanced using digital tools,” Ms. Cho said.

“This does not mean that poor beneficiaries have to become internet experts. Rather, wherever feasible, the implementers (should) use these tools and platforms for swifter response so they have sufficient time and energy to care for beneficiaries.”

Ms. Cho also recommended the streamlining of contingency financing mechanisms ahead of calamities and “simpler bureaucratic processes for activating and using the calamity funds.”

“Utilizing the rapidly developing and growing finance ecosystem for government transfers will greatly help,” Ms. Cho said.

She called for the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) ID and the PhilSys Number rollout to be expedited.

“The PhilSys holds a key to many of these recommendations and it has made a huge progress during the pandemic,” Ms. Cho said. — **Diego Gabriel C. Robles**

## Diokno signals Finance dep’t studying carbon tax feasibility

FINANCE Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno said his department is considering a carbon tax, and is currently working out whether such a measure is practicable.

“Carbon tax too, if feasible,” Mr. Diokno told reporters in a Viber message after being queried on fund-raising initiatives under consideration by the new government.

Asked to elaborate on the carbon tax, Mr. Diokno did not respond.

A tax on carbon emissions was contemplated in the third package of former Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III’s fiscal consolidation plan.

If approved, the third package is set to be implemented in 2025. The impact on government revenue has yet to be determined.

A carbon tax is levied on businesses that emit carbon dioxide, with the proceeds helping support greenhouse gas

mitigation projects while forcing companies to address their own emissions to minimize their tax exposure.

Mr. Diokno also signaled the possibility of imposing a tax on single-use plastics in an interview with the ABS-CBN News Channel on Wednesday.

“The Philippines is probably one of the most vulnerable with respect to climate change, and so it is in our own interest that the movement towards climate change should be supported,” he said. “I think we on our part, on the tax side, should think of some measures that we can do to reduce pollution. For example, a tax on single-use plastic is worth considering.”

A P20 excise tax per kilogram of single-use plastics was also part of the previous government’s fiscal consolidation plan, although it had been targeted for rollout in 2023.

The previous government estimated that the tax can raise P249 billion or more every year, with the revenue going towards paying down the P3.2 trillion in additional debt incurred during the pandemic.

At the end of May, National Government debt stood at P12.5 trillion.

Mr. Diokno formerly served as co-chair of the previous administration’s so-called “Green Force,” an Inter-Agency Task Force for Sustainable Finance.

The task force supported the Sustainable Finance Roadmap that hopes to unlock financing for green initiatives.

In April 2021, President Rodrigo R. Duterte approved the Philippines’ first Nationally Determined Contribution, which set a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 75% by 2030. — **Diego Gabriel C. Robles**

## DoTr’s Bautista urges PPA to lower shipping, travel costs

TRANSPORTATION Secretary Jaime J. Bautista urged the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) to work towards reducing the cost of shipping and travel, ahead of the appointment of the agency’s new leader.

“As we wait for the appointment of your General Manager, which will happen in the next couple of days, please make sure to further reduce shipping and travel costs nationwide and maintain the high quality of service in all ports,” Mr. Bautista said during a surprise visit to the PPA on Thursday.

Mr. Bautista promised to support the PPA in achieving government-to-government interconnectivity, information and communication technology, staffing, and compliance with global best practices for port administrators.

## Campaign launched against use of thermal paper in receipts

ENVIRONMENTAL organizations have written to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) calling for the use of thermal paper in receipts to be minimized, claiming that such material contains toxins that interfere with the workings of human hormones.

In a statement on Thursday, EcoWaste Coalition and Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability said they sent a joint letter on July 5 to the DTI, highlighting to Trade Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual and Trade Undersecretary Ruth B. Castelo the “hidden hazards” posed by thermal paper.

“According to the results of a pioneering study by the groups, endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) such as Bisphenol A (BPA) and its chemical cousin Bisphenol S (BPS) have been detected in thermal paper receipts collected from business and government establishments in the country. EDCs are non-natural chemicals or mixtures of chemicals that interfere with the way the body’s hormones work, causing adverse health effects,” they said.

“Laboratory tests... show that 32 of the 53 analyzed samples from the Philippines (60%) had BPA and 13 (25%) had BPS. The concentration range of BPA for the samples collected from Davao, Makati, Manila, Que-

zon City and Taguig was 0.92 to 1.86%, way above the European Union’s limit of 0.02%. The concentration range for BPS was 0.61 to 1.12%,” they added.

The two groups said that the study was done as part of the recently-completed eight-country EDC-Free Asia Project led by the Wonjin Institute for Occupational and Environmental Health with support from the Korea Financial Industry Public Interest Foundation.

They said that cashiers, mostly women, who handle thermal paper receipts may have high exposure, which may lead to adverse effects.

“We express our concern about the plight of cashiers who touch and handle thermal paper receipts on a daily basis as this may result in high BPA/BPS exposure and cause negative health outcomes, especially for pregnant or nursing women, and women of childbearing age,” they said.

They called for thermal paper to be phased out and to draft national regulations to that effect.

Asked to comment, Mr. Pascual told *BusinessWorld* via mobile phone that he has yet to evaluate the two groups’ proposals.

However, Mr. Pascual said that he is pushing for the use of digital receipts in the broader context of digitizing business transactions. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

## Fertilizer database proposed to clarify pricing components

THE GOVERNMENT needs to establish a fertilizer database to improve transparency on the cost components that go into prices charged by dealers, according to the findings of a study conducted by the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA).

“This will result in more accurate data and help improve price studies in the future. Moreover, reporting of price values in averages only might not be an accurate representation of the dealer’s prices given the differences in prices per region,” the FPA reported.

“To further improve the inventory monitoring (of) fertilizer... batch numbers of importers and local producers should cover sources of origin, manufacturing dates, dates of arrival, and landed costs for imports,” it added.

Regional dealer prices should be based on sources of origin plus logistics costs, in accordance with a prescribed price matrix, according to the report.

“Importing companies are urged to coordinate and order bulk imports from certain countries, if possible, to avail of lower prices and discounts and save freight costs,” the study concluded.

The FPA reported that fertilizer prices rose sharply worldwide, even before the war in Ukraine. The international price of urea rose to \$393.25 per metric ton (MT) in June 2021 from \$216 per MT in June 2020.

“Global fertilizer prices increased during 2021 with limited supply brought about by the disruption of production and transportation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, higher input costs, the hike in fuel prices, trade disputes and geopolitics, and the recent Russian invasion of Ukraine,” it added.

Fertilizer prices in the Philippines started to increase in mid-2021 and surged towards the end of the year, according to the study.

“The Philippines, as a net importer of fertilizer, is vulnerable to rising fertilizer prices (as the) COVID-19 pandemic caused fertilizer shortages around the globe,” it added.

The report recommended that the government conclude bilateral agreements with countries producing fertilizer to bring down costs.

It also recommended “market assistance in regions where fertilizer is expensive to ensure supply and lower fertilizer prices by reducing additional transportation costs,” it said.

The FPA also proposed the adoption of alternatives like organic, microbial, and biorational fertilizer to reduce dependence on chemical fertilizer. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

JOB OPENING

**PHILIPPINES BRANCH COUNTRY MANAGER/ NETWORK ARCHITECT**

**Duties and Responsibilities:**

- Responsible of the local registration and compliance with the Philippines authorities
- Manage the day to day operations of the administrative office
- Participate to the hiring, promotion and dismissal of employees
- Be the technical specialist/design authority for the international transmission network
- Participate in the knowledge/skills development of the Philippine team by providing regular av and training
- Ensure the technical escalation for network related incidents

**Qualification:**

- Master Degree in Telecommunications

**BSO Ireland Limited**  
Davao City, Davao Del Sur  
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JOB OPENING

**Name of company: TRIP.COM (PHILIPPINES) INC.**  
**Place of assignment**  
9th and 10th Floors, Ten West Campus Building, McKinley West, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City  
**Position:** Customer Advisor  
**Quantity of workers needed: 1**

**Brief description of functions**

- Assist customers with their inquiries and concerns in English via phone, chat or e-mail
- Communicate effectively with customers, showing empathy and patience
- Work as part of a high-performing team, supporting and helping colleagues and Team Lead as required
- Assist with ad hoc projects as assigned
- Advocate the company’s culture both internally and externally

**Brief description of the qualification**

- At least Tertiary Educational Attainment
- Minimum 3-4 years of experience in BPO industry
- Excellent communication skills to work with different stakeholders
- Fluent in English and Chinese languages

Interested applicants may send their resume to: [recruitmentph@trip.com](mailto:recruitmentph@trip.com)

JOB VACANCY

**Name of company:** Keppel Philippines Properties, Inc.  
**Place of assignment:** 16/F The Podium West Tower, 12 ADB Avenue Corner Ortigas, Brgy. Wack-Wack, Greenhills, Ortigas Avenue, 1555 City of Mandaluyong, NCR, Philippines  
**Position:** Country Head  
**Quantity of workers needed:** 1

**Brief description of functions**

- Develop high quality business strategies and plans
- Lead and motivate staff to develop a high performing local team
- Oversee all operations and business activities to achieve desired results and ensure they aligned with the overall strategy
- Comply with local regulations, adhere to corporate government and company’s entrance code of conduct and policies in overseeing company’s business operations
- Build rapport with key partners and stakeholders

**Brief description of the qualification**

- Tertiary education and Master’s Degree
- Minimum 10 years of experience in business development and project operations in real estate industry
- Has at least five (7) years work experience in a real estate multinational company
- Excellent communication skills to work with different stakeholders (local and international)
- Project and people management expertise
- Advantage is he or she has previously assigned or worked abroad for at least two (4) years

Interested applicants may send their resume to: [janel.dazo@kepland.com.ph](mailto:janel.dazo@kepland.com.ph)