Arrival window for imported sugar extended to Oct. 31

THE Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) said the arrival period for sugar ordered overseas to supplement domestic supply has been extended to the end of October due to shipping delays.

Sugar Order (SO) No. 3 series of 2022-2023 issued by the SRA on Oct. 19 extended the arrival deadline for the 200,000 metric tons (MT) of foreign sugar authorized for import to Oct. 31.

"The deadline for application for SRA Clearance for release of imported sugar has been extended to Sept. 30, 2022 and the arrival date of any imported sugar for this program is also extended to Oct. 31, 2022," according to the order.


PHILIPPINE STAR/EDD GUMBAN

"The SRA received request(s) to change the arrival date of any imported sugar for the above-said importation program due to vessel delays and lack of availability of container vans being experienced not just regionally but also globally," it added.

In February, the SRA issued SO No. 3 series of 2021-2022 allowing imports of 200,000 MT of sugar for crop year 2021-2022. Industrial users will also be allowed to transfer and sell part or all of their imported sugar allocation to other industrial users or assignees.

According to the SRA, import allocations for 9,194 MT of refined sugar have yet to apply for SRA clearance.

The industrial users inquiring about transferring their supply told the SRA that their shipments have arrived but are not immediately needed.

Meanwhile, "there are industrial users who... are still in urgent need to augment their sugar supply," it added.

Asked to comment, United Sugar Producers Federation President Manuel R. Lamata said in a Viber message that the new order will benefit consumers and the industry.

The transfers "will bring down the very high retail prices. The industrials have agreed to this scheme to help the government and consumers. (SO No. 3) will not affect us farmers," Mr. Lamata said.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) estimates the price of refined sugar as of Oct. 20 at P100 per kilogram (/kg).

The DA has said it will sell refined sugar at P70/kg in Kadiwa outlets and SRA offices in Quezon City and Bacolod City. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Bus carousel, ports first in line for PPP

THE Department of Transportation and the Department of Public Works and Highways said the EDSA bus carousel and seaports will be among the first projects to be offered up for public-private partnerships (PPPs).

"We plan to invite as much private sector participation in our infrastructure projects (as possible), such as for the EDSA Carousel, the operation of our seaports, the privatization of 10 provincial airports, the Cebu Bus Rapid Transit project and many more," Transport Secretary Jaime J. Bautista said.

According to Mr. Bautista, the PPP scheme has been proven an effective route for injecting the private sector's technical expertise and resources into government projects.

"By harnessing the expertise and capabilities of (private companies), we can confidently bring to completion these ambitious undertakings," Mr. Bautista said in his address to a convention organized by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"PPP remains one of the major platforms of this administration (for leveraging) the assets of the private sector, not only in terms of the funds but also in technology and innovation," Public Works Undersecretary Maria Catalina E. Cabral said.

Ms. Cabral pointed however for the need to pass a new Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) Law, even after revisions were made to the current law's implementing rules and regulations.

"I think we should move towards enacting a new BOT Law," Ms. Cabral said. "We are now actively pursuing the enactment of the new law that will (have under its umbrella) all other modes of private participation."

He said joint venture arrangements are not adequately covered by the BOT Law.

She added that the government will push for a new law in a manner that will not disrupt the project and investment pipeline. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Air21 calls for end-to-end digitization of supply chain

LOGISTICS company Air21 Holdings, Inc. said the government must cut down on the sources of friction hindering supply chains by digitizing the shipping process from end to end, and called for investment in the infrastructure that will enable such a transformation, such as data centers.

Air21 Holdings Chairman and President Alberto D. Lina said the government's role in transforming the industry is to accelerate digitization, overhaul regulation, and build capacity in the workforce.

The goal is "unhampered movement of goods and to prepare such touch points along the supply chain," Mr. Lina said at the 48th Philippine Business Conference and Expo, organized by the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

"We need to push for the entire supply chain — from end to end — to be fully digitized and to have real time intelligence on the state of our industry," Mr. Lina added.

Mr. Lina said the data industry must be built up to ensure that the data gathered in digitizing the logistics process is legally gathered, safely stored and processed, and properly disposed of.

Mr. Lina added that regulations should be harmonized for companies like this that have to deal with various jurisdictions such as ports and local governments.

He said truck bans and traffic number coding need to be implemented in a manner that does not hamper the flow of goods.

"We welcome the recent initiative of the DTI (Department of Trade and Industry), TESDA (Technical Education and Skills Development Authority) and PTTC (Philippine Trade Training Center) in tapping the logistics industry in drafting the Philippine skill framework for logistics," Mr. Lina said. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**


WWW.AIR21.COM.PH

Recession by late 2023 tops list of PHL economic worries

MORE than two-thirds of Filipinos surveyed are expecting a recession by the end of 2023, according to a study conducted by TransUnion, a consumer credit reporting agency.

"Consumers were anticipating a potential recession in the near future. 76% of respondents agreed the economy is either already in a recession or will enter a recession at some point by the end of 2023," according to the study, which surveyed 1,013 adults between Aug. 19 and Sept. 1.

During the survey period, 44% said inflation was their top concern, up from 35% a quarter earlier.

In September, headline inflation hit 6.9%, the highest level in 13 years, driven by rising food, transport, and energy costs.

"This elevated inflation rate may serve as a trigger for the central bank to hike rates even further, pushing up borrowing costs for businesses and consumers. In addition, amid uncertainty about inflation, consumers started cutting back on discretionary spending and increasing savings," the report read.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas will likely raise interest rates in its next policy-setting meeting in November to contain inflation. For the year so far, the Monetary Board has raised benchmark interest rates by a combined 225 basis points.

"As a precaution, consumers (have taken) action in response to a potential recession; 66% of respondents built up savings, while 69% of respondents reduced spending and 33% paid down debt," the study found.

More than half of respondents chose to tap into their savings to pay down debt.

More consumers also expressed the intention to cut household spending, with around 54% focusing on areas of potential saving like dining out, travel, and entertainment in the last three months.

Some 79% of consumers said their income was stagnant, while respondents declaring confidence in their financial situation over the next 12 months fell to 81% from 83% a quarter earlier.

During the survey period, 27% of consumers said they turned to moneylenders in the past 12 months, up from 22% in the previous period, while 18% availed of payday loans, up from 14%.

Some 54% of respondents said they are planning to apply for personal loans while 41% were thinking of applying for a credit card.

"The need for transport is back as the country is on track to return to full normalcy, evidenced by an increase in respondents who planned to apply for an auto loan," the study found.

"There appeared to be a rush to refinance mortgages and home loans before the anticipated interest rate hike, as the percentage of respondents who planned to do so jumped by 5% from the second quarter," it added. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**


CASEY HORNER-UNSPLASH

NGCP launches operations at Calamba substation

THE National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) said it has started operating its 230-kiloVolt (kV) substation in Calamba to address the growing demand for power south of the capital region.

The project consists of the Calamba 230-kV Substation; the Calamba-Bay 230-kV Transmission Line 2; and the Calamba-Biñan 230-kV Transmission Line 2.

The Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) has approved capital spending of P1.07 billion for the project.

The NGCP said that the substation is strategically located near industrial parks to accommodate demand in Laguna, Batangas and adjacent provinces.

It added that industrial customers, factories, and manufacturing plants are expected to benefit with the substation.

The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) tallies 10 manufacturing economic zones in Batangas and 14 in Laguna.

The NGCP transmission development plan calls for the Calamba substation to step in for overloading in drawdown substations in Sta. Rosa and Calauan and on the Calauan–Los Baños 115-kV distribution line.

"With many industrial and residential developments south of Metro Manila, NGCP's new Calamba 230-kV Substation is a critical facility for South Luzon. The substation and its associated transmission lines will also serve as another highway to prevent overloading and other reliability issues," the NGCP said in a statement. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

Cotabato Light connects 1,500 households in sitio electrification drive

COTABATO LIGHT and Power Co. said on Thursday that it has connected to electricity service more than 1,500 households within its franchise as part of a Sitio Electrification Program (SEP) to bring power to remote areas.

Cotabato Light, a subsidiary of Aboitiz Power Corp. said in a statement that the program covers Cotabato City, parts of Sultan Kudarat, and Datu Odin Sinsuat, Maguindanao.

Valentin S. Saludes III, president and chief operating officer of Cotabato Light, said the company has invested around P37 million in its SEP operations, SEP is a national strategy for achieving full electrification, focusing on remote communities.

"We have identified several measures in order to meet our assigned area of completion and full energization target by November 2022," Mr. Saludes said.

The company said it has erected more than 1,000 poles to ensure delivery of service. The company's SEP target is more than 1,600 households in its franchise area. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**


CARNIVAL.COM

Carnival Cruise Line signs training deal with STI, merchant marine school

CARNIVAL CRUISE LINE said it has entered into a training agreement with the Philippine Merchant Marine Academy (PMMA) and STI Educational Services Group, Inc. (STI-ESG).

"Carnival wants to go beyond providing traditional roles. We want to make it across all functions — captains, chief engineers, hotel directors, chefs. Every position where we could really find the best qualified team members," Bettina Deynes, senior vice-president and chief human resources officer for Carnival, said in a statement.

PMMA will prepare students for shipboard operations and help Carnival selecting candidates for cadetships, internships, and other employment arrangements.

STI-ESG or STI Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering Institute will offer slots at its school in Manila for culinary and housekeeping courses.

"With our partnership with Carnival, our students can be confident that they will get the best training and they have somewhere to go once they graduate," STI Holdings President and Chief Executive Officer Monico V. Jacob said.

Carnival said its recruitment agency, United Philippine Line, has worked to also develop and provide opportunities for maritime students in other parts of the Philippines. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**