

## PHL motor vehicle output up 6.9% in first 11 months

PHILIPPINE motor vehicle production in the first 11 months rose 6.9% from a year earlier, according to the ASEAN Automotive Federation (AAF).

Philippine motor vehicle production during the period totaled 84,138 units, according to AAF data posted on its website.

The Philippine growth rate lagged those of its neighbors, with Myanmar output rising 134.4%, Vietnam 52.7%, Malaysia 48.2%, Indonesia 32.5%, and Thailand 16.9%.

Regional output was 4.057 million motor vehicles during the period, up 27.4% year on year.

In November, Philippine motor vehicle production rose 48.3% year on year to 10,315 units, according to the AAF.

Philippine vehicle sales during the period rose 31% from a year earlier to 315,337 units.

Sales growth rates in the rest of the main Southeast Asian markets were 44.8% for Malaysia, 43.5% for Vietnam,

22.6% for Thailand, and 19.2% for Indonesia.

Vehicle sales in Singapore and Myanmar dropped 28.8% and 17.2%, respectively during the period.

Unit sales for the region rose 27.2% year on year to 3.134 million units.

In November, Philippine motor vehicle sales rose 32.4% year-on-year to 35,037 units.

Philippine production of motorcycles and scooters during the 11 months rose 7.1% year on year to 865,246 units.

Growth leaders in this category were Malaysia (43.6%) and Thailand (13.8%).

In November, Philippine motorcycle and scooter production rose 18.4% year on year to 94,708 units.

By sales, Philippine motorcycles and scooters shipped in the 11 months 11.2% to 1.45 million unit.

Sales growth leaders for motorcycles and scooters were Malaysia (42.5%) and Thailand (12.8%). — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

# Romualdez: Congress efforts enabled Diokno's rosy outlook

SPEAKER Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez said the positive economic outlook issued by Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno was enabled in part by the efforts of Congress.

Of the nine factors Mr. Diokno cited in his positive outlook, four were the "direct result" of work done by Congress — the early approval of the 2023 national budget, the approval of the Medium-Term Fiscal Framework for 2023-2028, the removal of barriers to foreign investment, and the continuation of the Build, Build,

Build program with expanded private-sector participation, Mr. Romualdez said in a statement.

"We, in the House of Representatives, welcome the good news from our Finance Secretary that the worst is over for the Philippines and better years are expected," Mr. Romualdez said.

Mr. Diokno said earlier in the week that he expects the Philippines to post one of the highest growth rates among the six major economies of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) next year.

Mr. Romualdez added that the House of Representatives will focus on passing "pro-people" measures like the bill establishing the Maharlika Investment Fund (MIF).

Mr. Romualdez promised to pass 12 priority measures identified by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. once Congress resumes session on Jan. 23.

The priority bills are the proposed enabling law for the Natural Gas Industry; amendments to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act (EPIRA); a measure harmonizing procedures for sep-

aration, retirement and pension; the proposed E-Governance Act and E-Government Act; the proposed National Land Use Act; the proposed National Defense Act; the proposed National Government Rightsizing Program; the proposed Budget Modernization Bill; the bill creating the Department of Water Resources; the bill establishing the Negros Island Region; the proposed Magna Carta for Filipino Seafarers; and a measure establishing regional specialty hospitals. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

## GSIS to provide education subsidy to 10,000 children of members

THE GOVERNMENT Service Insurance System (GSIS) said 10,000 children of members qualified for financial aid for academic year (AY) 2022 to 2023.

The pension fund for civil servants said Thursday that the aid program, known as the GSIS

Educational Subsidy Program (GESP), will receive P100 million overall to fund educational subsidy of P10,000 per child.

GSIS President Jose Arnulfo A. Veloso said in a statement: "We wish to help our members who are bringing their kids to college,

as it may help lessen their spending."

Some 1,235 grantees are from the National Capital Region; 2,212 from North Luzon; 2,251 from South Luzon; 2,005 from the Visayas; and 2,297 from Mindanao, it said.

Members' children must be enrolled in any year level of a four or five-year course in a Commission on Higher Education-registered university or college and have a general weighted average of 80% in order to qualify. — **Aaron Michael C. Sy**

PHILIPPINE STAR/MICHAEL VARGAS



## Farmers say supply not the issue in high agri prices

PRICES of agricultural commodities will continue to rise next year if the government fails to address the gap between farmgate and retail prices, farmers' associations said.

"I think we will continue to have both supply and marketing problems next year," Raul Q. Montemayor, chairman of the Federation of Free Farmers, said in a Viber message to *BusinessWorld* Thursday.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has blamed rising prices of agricultural commodities on price manipulation and smuggling.

"Retail prices are disproportionately high compared to farmgate prices but DA is making it appear as mainly a supply problem," Mr. Montemayor said.

Samahang Industriya ng Agrikultura (SINAG) Executive Director Jayson H. Cainglet said that the government should stabilize costs by getting to the bottom of the gap between farmgate and retail prices.

SINAG estimates the farmgate price of rice is at P17 to P21 per

kilo; pork P160 to P180; chicken P120 to P130; corn P23 to P25; and onions P100 to P150.

The DA's own price monitoring found that as of Dec. 28, domestic commercial rice retailed for P48 to P60 per kilo; pork P280 to P310; chicken P190 to P205; and onions P500 to P600.

"As far as we are concerned, there is no supply gap because if there is a supply problem farmgate price should increase as well," Mr. Cainglet told *BusinessWorld* by phone.

Factors affecting the retail prices of commodities, according to Mr. Cainglet are logistics and importers, which "dictate the prices of products, not producers or the government."

"Rising prices were not solely due to tight supply. They were instigated by the spike in fuel prices which spilled over to higher transport, labor, and other costs, then made worse by speculation and profiteering," Mr. Montemayor said.

Mr. Cainglet said the government should intervene and stop blaming producers for high prices.

"If they can get the supply directly and sell it, all the better. There are a lot of possible interventions, (like imposing) suggested retail prices, (engaging) local government units (and) big companies to buy directly from producers," Mr. Cainglet said.

"With the right incentives and support programs, it will be relatively easy to increase production and supply. But we will have to carefully manage imports and fix the marketing bottlenecks," Mr. Montemayor said.

As the price of onions continues to surge, Mr. Cainglet also called on the government to address the lack of cold storage particularly with the onion harvest approaching.

Further, Mr. Cainglet warned that the situation could get worse if the government continues with its "reckless policy of unabated imports" and lowered tariff rates.

Earlier in December, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. accepted the recommendation of the National Economic and Development Authority Board to

extend the reduction in tariffs for pork, corn, rice and coal until Dec. 31, 2023.

The DA has also authorized expedited imports of 64,050 metric tons (MT) of refined sugar to stabilize prices.

Negros Occidental Representative and former Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) board member Emilio Bernardino L. Yulo said "it will be a good start for 2023 for the sugar industry as sugar prices strongly rebounded."

In a statement, Mr. Yulo said that the government should continue to temper consumer prices and look at the entire supply chain to determine "who is making a windfall from the high retail prices."

"Prices have breached the P3,000 per 50Lkg bag which will make it a little bit profitable for our farmers who have been on their toes in the past weeks (with) the downturn in sugar prices," Mr. Yulo said, adding that the current price is "comfortable enough to ease the fears among the planters." — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

## LANDBANK lending to fisheries tops P2.8 billion

THE LAND Bank of the Philippines (LANDBANK) said outstanding loans to the fisheries sector hit P2.8 billion at the end of November.

In a statement Thursday, the state-run bank said that it offers lending programs designed to boost fisheries production.

Its product lines include a sustainable aquaculture lending program, which finances fishers' associations, cooperatives or federations, non-government organizations (NGOs), micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), large agribusiness enterprises, and countryside financial institutions (CFIs).

The facility can be used to fund breeding, hatchery, nursery, production, culture, seaweed

farming, processing, trading, and other such activities.

"The program is anchored on institutional buyers or processing and canning companies linked with fishers' cooperatives associations or MSMEs as growers or suppliers," it said.

LANDBANK also offers a commercial fishing vessel financing program for vessels intended for domestic or overseas use.

"The program caters to single proprietorships, partnerships, cooperatives and corporations, for the purchase or acquisition of brand-new, second-hand or refurbished commercial fishing boats and related equipment," the bank added. — **Luisa Maria Jacina C. Joeson**

## DENR hoping to deploy biotech solutions to fight climate change

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it will explore biotechnology solutions in addressing climate change.

"Biotechnology is one of the tools that we can use to boost economic growth, create jobs, develop healthcare solutions, improve agri-food systems, and rehabilitate and protect our environment and natural resources," Environment Undersecretary Jonas R. Leones said in a statement.

The DENR said biotech advances will also help the department arrive at "scientifically informed" decisions.

Separately, Trade Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual said developments in the field will also help the government produce clean energy and reducing environmental footprints.

"Biotechnology's breakthrough products and technologies feature multifaceted benefits. Aside from creating vaccines that combat debilitating diseases, biotechnology can produce clean energy, reduce our environmental footprint, and make industrial manufacturing processes safer, cleaner, and more efficient," Mr. Pascual added. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

### NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

EXTRAJUDICIAL SETTLEMENT AMONG HEIRS OF THE DECEASED JUAN S. DE LA CRUZ AND EDNA M. DE LA CRUZ

NOTICE is hereby given that the estate of the late JUAN S. DE LA CRUZ who died on January 28, 2021 and EDNA M. DE LA CRUZ who died on July 26, 2022 has been extrajudicially settled among their heirs.

The deceased left a jointly owned four (4) parcel of land with TCT No.: N-49320, RT-94628 (343359), RT-94629 (343358) and R-13780, Loyola Memorial Park at Makati City under Cert. of Ownership No. 78-18268 with Purchase Agreement No. 29316 owned by Juan Dela Cruz; Cert. of Ownership No. 78-18302 with Purchase Agreement No. 29317 and Cert. of Ownership No. 86-44091 with Purchase Agreement No. 050020-7 owned by Edna Dela Cruz.

This settlement is under Notice of Public Atty. MARCELINO U. ARELLANO with Doc No. 209, Page No. 43, Book No. LXVII, Series of 2022.

## IP filings rise 4.4% in first nine months

THE INTELLECTUAL Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) said IP registration applications rose 4.4% year on year in the first nine months as economic activity picked up.

During the period, IPOPHL said filings for trademarks, patents, utility models (UM), and industrial designs (ID) totaled 36,709, against the 35,172 applications posted a year earlier.

"The latest figures show impressive recovery in IP filings as we are on track to exceeding pre-pandemic volumes. This is largely driven by increased economic activity as quarantine restrictions have de-escalated in many areas to their laxest

yet," IPOPHL Director General Rowel S. Barba said in a statement Thursday.

According to the IPOPHL, trademark filings rose 5.6% to 31,665. Residents accounted for 62% or 19,762 filings.

Patent filings increased 2.3% to 3,116. The patent filings were dominated by non-residents, accounting for 90% of the total.

ID filings, or applications that safeguard the unique appearance of a product, rose 1% to 923. Non-residents accounted for 516 filings or 56% of the total.

UM filings, which provide patent-like protection for shorter periods with a less rigorous application process, dropped 17.2%

to 1,005. Residents accounted for 96% of the UM filings.

IPOPHL said that 19% of trademark filings were from the pharmaceuticals, health, and cosmetics industries, followed by agricultural products and services (16.8%), and scientific research, information and communication technology (14.5%).

Patent filings were dominated by pharmaceuticals (29.3%), organic fine chemistry (11.6%), and biotechnology (8.6%).

ID applications were led by means of transport or hoisting at 18.7%, followed by packages and containers for transport or handling of goods at 9.1%, and furnishing at 8.4%.

UM applications were dominated by food chemistry at 46.8%, other special machines at 9.1%, and IT methods for management at 4.4%.

Separately, IPOPHL said copyright registrations surged 69.1% to 2,602 filings. The applications were led by books, pamphlets, articles, e-books, audio books, comics, novels and other writings (29%), followed by other literary, scholarly, scientific and artistic works (27.8%), and drawings, paintings, architectural works, sculpture, engraving, prints, lithography or other works of art, models or designs for works of art (9.3%). — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

### Golden Haven caps the year with festive Paskong Pinoy celebration

Golden Haven, the leading name in the Philippine deathcare industry and developer of the country's largest and most beautiful memorial parks, recently capped a most productive year with a chain-wide Christmas celebration that depicted a festive "Paskong Pinoy" theme.

Counting more than 30 Golden Haven properties participating in the simultaneously held bash on Dec. 16, the event was livestreamed on the company's Facebook page. During the livestreaming, a few Golden Haven branches were given a chance to show off their whimsical setups and fancy takes on the Paskong Pinoy celebration.

There were online games, too, to ensure that virtual attendees shared in the fun and excitement.

True to the season of giving, most of the Golden Haven branches offered a slew of exclusive deals



and special promos. Other exclusive promos included a "3- to 5-year, no down payment" deal and multiple lot discounts. Online audiences saved anywhere from P13,000 to P140,000 by grabbing the promo being endorsed that day.

Before the day wound up, a spectacular Christmas tree lighting ceremony was simultaneously held in all Golden Haven memorial parks. At precisely 6 p.m., more than 30 Christmas trees lit up the Philippine skies.