

# Fisherfolk seek cancellation of Cavite dredging environmental clearance

FISHERFOLK have asked the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to revoke the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) granted for the two dredging projects in Cavite, citing the impact on their livelihood.

“Since the beginning of dredging in the municipal waters of Naic in 2021, fishermen’s income

has dramatically decreased to only an estimated P300 for two days of fishing,” Fernando L. Hicap, chairman of the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA), said in a statement.

According to PAMALAKAYA, Silverquest Mining Resources, Inc. received an ECC for a seabed quarry project in 2021.

The project covers 2,214 hectares of municipal waters off Ternate and Naic, Cavite.

Another clearance was issued to Dutch dredging firm Royal Boskalis Westminster N.V. (Boskalis) in Rosario, Cavite, PAMALAKAYA said.

Both activities support the reclamation and development projects conducted within Manila Bay.

According to Mr. Hicap, the dredging has resulted in reduced catches of common whiting (*asohos*), red sea bream (*besugo*), and blue crab (*alimasag*) due to the noise and pollution caused by dredging.

Citing a study by the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau, a research arm of the DENR, Mr. Hicap said that nearly 72%

of coral reefs in Cavite are under threat of destruction.

He also claimed no public consultation was conducted before the dredging projects were approved.

The DENR was asked to comment but had not replied at the deadline. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

## DoE still wary of unsafe LPG industry practices

THE Department of Energy (DoE) said it will “guide” the liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) industry in complying with the law to discourage the spread of counterfeit LPG products and deter unsafe practices.

“We need to be more perceptive of the demands of the LPG industry. We, at the Department, will ensure proper facilitation and monitoring of the industry and guide the LPG industry participants in understanding the objectives of the law for the benefit of our consumers,” Alessandro O. Sales, Energy undersecretary said during the LPG summit on Friday.

According to the DoE, LPG demand in 2021 was 3,272 million liters (ML), up 3.5%.

The DoE has yet to release LPG demand estimates for 2022. Sales in the nine months to September hit at 2,431 ML.

“With its high demand, the LPG industry has significantly widened its market, but some of its participants are engaging in unfair and unsafe trade practices, impairing consumers and to a full extent, causing negative externalities to society,” the DoE said in a statement.

The Bureau of Fire Protection tallied 1,254 fire incidents between 2010 and 2021 linked to LPG use.

“Although small in number, the gravity to property and lives is enormous. This is the very reason why the government puts safety as the major focus in the business of LPG,” the DoE said.

The LPG Industry Regulation Act or Republic Act No. 11592 includes an LPG Cylinder Improvement Program to ensure withdrawal from the market of unsafe cylinders to minimize LPG-related explosions and fires.

Mr. Sales said the DoE will phase out generic and unmarked cylinders and impose sanctions on illegal refillers.

The DoE and Department of Trade and Industry released a joint department circular to strengthen the DoE’s authority to issue licenses for DoE-regulated LPG industry participants.

The DoE said the LPG Cylinder Exchange, Swapping, and Improvement Programs, and its Implementing Guidelines will allow the department to suspend operations and recommend revocation of licenses of violators.

— **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

# Funding for free WiFi in remote areas hits P2.5 billion in 2023

INFORMATION and Communications Technology Secretary Ivan John E. Uy said his department has about P2.5 billion this year to roll out free WiFi services in remote parts of the Philippines.

“For this year, the total free WiFi or Broadband ng Masa (budget), everything is I think around two and a half billion,” Mr. Uy told *BusinessWorld* on the sidelines of the project launch in Antique Province.

On March 3, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) and Senate President Pro Tempore Loren B. Legarda launched Broadband ng Masa in Antique across six sites within the campus of the University of Antique, as well as in Barangay Calo-oy in Sibalom.

For 2023, the DICT plans to increase the number of activated WiFi sites in Antique to

150 which will be located in: the university’s Sibalom, Tario Lim Memorial, Libertad, Caluya, and Hamtic campuses and in 145 barangays.

“I am glad that the DICT, headed by Secretary Ivan John Uy, heeded our call to bring the Broadband ng Masa program to Antique to install WiFi sites in the different University of Antique campuses, and in other parts of the province, including in indigenous community areas,” Ms. Legarda said.

Next year, Ms. Legarda said the goal is to install free WiFi sites in the remaining barangays of Antique province.

“By 2024, (we will pursue) full digitalization of the whole of Antique, for all of the 590 barangays,” she said.

The free WiFi service will be implemented via a combination of fiber optic and terrestrial

wireless-based high-speed internet service starting in San Jose de Buenavista, the provincial capital, and Libertad.

According to Mr. Uy, the next installations of the free WiFi sites will “depend on where we have the funding to proceed,” Mr. Uy said.

Antique is the first province on Panay Island to be connected through the Broadband ng Masa project.

Mr. Uy said that the DICT is looking to impose restriction on free WiFi use.

These include a cap on downloads and blocks on pornographic and gambling sites.

“We are already developing all those capabilities to manage the WiFi sites. Right now, we are still assessing,” Mr. Uy said. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

## Export ‘breakthrough’ seen depending on industry achieving scale

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said the competitiveness of Philippine exports will depend on whether industry achieves appropriate scale while remaining sustainable.

Trade Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual said at an event organized by the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions (CITEM) in Taguig City last week that apart from achieving scale,

industry should also pursue higher value-added export activities.

“Industry development requires a shift in our mindset, from simply promoting existing profitable products and services to promoting and highlighting our capabilities. Industry development is the best way to deliver exporting breakthroughs,” Mr. Pascual said.

Mr. Pascual said that the country seeks to grab a bigger share of the global market, adding that the DTI will seek to expand the market reach of Philippine-made products.

He said the DTI will lead efforts to raise quality levels to make Philippine products more competitive globally.

“The DTI is devoted to creating an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient indus-

trial policy, which contributes to building a competitive economy. This includes nurturing micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to develop world-class products and giving them a spotlight on the international market,” Mr. Pascual said.

The Philippine Statistics Authority reported in January that export earnings rose 5.6% to \$78.84 billion in 2022. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

## INVITATION TO BID

# LONG-TERM LEASE AND DEVELOPMENT OF 37-HECTARE PROPERTY IN THE NEW CLARK CITY, CAPAS, TARLAC, PHILIPPINES

Be part of the solar power generation development in the Philippines' smart, sustainable and green investment destination.

Pursuant to Republic Act No. 7227 (R. A. No. 7227), otherwise known as “The Bases Conversion and Development Act of 1992, as amended”, the Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) invites all interested Private Sector Participants (PSPs) to participate in the bid for the long-term lease and development of the 37-hectare lot in the New Clark City into a large-scale solar photovoltaic power plant.

The Property is located at the northernmost portion of the New Clark City called the “Buffer Zone”. The use of the property is for the development of at least 25 megawatt (MW) solar power plant which is aligned with the vision and aspiration for the New Clark City - the country’s first smart, sustainable, and green city. BCDA is offering an initial lease period of 25 years and renewable for another 25 years, upon mutual agreement of the Parties.

Interested PSPs may participate in the bid by purchasing the Terms of Reference (TOR) starting on **08 March 2023** at the BCDA Corporate Center, 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, 31st Street corner 2nd Avenue, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City for a non-refundable fee of **Php75,000.00**, payable to BCDA in the form of cash or Manager’s/Cashier’s Check. An electronic copy of the TOR will be made available online at **www.bcdagov.ph/bids**.

A Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on **24 March 2023, 10:00 A.M.** at the BCDA Corporate Office in Taguig City. The final date of submission of the Bid Document, Eligibility Requirements and Financial Proposal shall be on **21 April 2023, 12:00 Noon**, at the BCDA Office in the 2/F Bonifacio Technology Center, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City, Philippines.

This bidding is being administered by the BCDA Asset Disposition Program Committee (ADP-Com), and any questions shall be addressed to the ADP-Com Chairperson. For additional queries you may get in touch with the Secretariat at nos. **+632-8575-1765 / 045-499-8617** or through email at **nccsolar\_adpcom@bcdagov.ph**.



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