

Dam water deemed sufficient until May or June

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) expects the water supply at Angat Dam and other reservoirs to be sufficient until May or June.

“From our calculations the amount of water that we have from Angat and from sources would be good for all our supply until around May or June of 2024,” Environment Undersecretary Carlos Primo C. David said at a briefing late Monday.

Angat Dam supplies about 90% of Metro Manila’s potable water. On Friday, the dam filled to its maximum level, triggering the opening of its spill gates.

“Angat... is fairly full. We’re trying to keep it that way so that once we enter 2024, it’s at maximum volume,” Mr. David added.

He said that if the El Niño phenomenon intensifies or extends beyond June, “then it will be a major problem for

Metro Manila; that’s why conservation is important.”

The government weather service, known as PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration), has forecast an El Niño lasting until the second quarter with about 65 provinces facing “severe” drought and six provinces potentially experiencing dry spells during the period.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., last week, ordered the restructuring of the El Niño task force which has been assigned to create programs to mitigate the impact of El Niño, with the DENR placed in charge of water resources.

“Conservation will be an important strategy in the first and second quarter of 2024,” he added.

Mr. David said that if El Niño intensifies next year, then the Metro Manila water crisis might be as bad as 2019’s.

“We should be better in terms of forecasting, better in terms of managing our resources,” he added.

Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said water concessionaires Manila Water Co., Inc. (Manila Water) and Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad) have been seeking to tap more sources of water.

“Companies in Metro Manila... have really stepped-up efforts in terms of what they are able to provide by way of clean and accessible potable water,” Ms. Yulo-Loyzaga added.

Asked to comment, both Manila Water and Maynilad said that they have implemented programs to ensure sufficient water for the capital region.

“With these projects and the support of the public in the advocacy on responsible use of water, we hope that we will be able to weather the challenges of El Niño next year to continue to provide 24/7

supply to our customers in the East Zone and reduce the dependency on Angat,” Manila Water Corporate Communications Affairs Group Director Nestor Jeric T. Sevilla, Jr. said in a Viber message.

Maynilad Corporate Communications Head Jennifer C. Rufo said in a Viber message that the company has carried out a supply augmentation program which includes the tapping of alternate sources and the minimization of water losses.

“The effort to increase stored water in Angat Dam before the year ends is also an added measure being pursued by (Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System) with support from (National Water Resources Board),” Ms. Rufo added.

The DENR has offered 135 water projects for private sector investment to raise the supply of potable water. — **Adrian H. Halili**

Net-metering systems may no longer need RE certificate

THE Department of Energy (DoE) has released a draft circular that would do away with the renewable energy certificate (REC) for net-metering systems.

“REC meter shall no longer be required subsequent to the ERC’s (Energy Regulatory Commission) issuance of a methodology for estimating the energy or generation of the Net-Metering facility,” the DoE said in the draft.

RECs are issued to participants in the Renewable Portfolio Standards scheme, indicating the energy sourced, produced, and sold or used from eligible renewable energy systems.

Net metering allows power users that generate their own electricity via renewable energy to sell some of their excess power to the grid, credited against their power bills. The program is open to users with a capacity of up to 100 kilowatts.

“The amended Net-Metering Rules addressed most of the economic and technical barriers of the current Net-Metering Program; thus, the DoE deems it necessary to further enhance the current Net-Metering policies and arrangements in order to increase the utilization of RE (renewable energy) through the Net-Metering Program,” the department said.

The DoE is also looking into removing the provision on threshold capacity for net-metering installations.

Under the original circular, any qualified end-user under the net-metering scheme should not be a net generator or producer at the end of each calendar year. “This is to avoid oversizing of the Net-Metering facility, where the annual electricity generation of the facility has exceeded the Qualified End-User’s annual energy consumption,” the DoE said. — **Sheldene Joy Talavera**

Luzon planters join call for gov’t action on sugar farmgate, retail price disparity

By **Adrian H. Halili**
Reporter

LUZON sugar planters have weighed in with their own appeal for government intervention to narrow the gap between sugar farmgate and retail prices.

The Luzon Federation of Sugar Producers, Inc. said on Tuesday that high retail prices coupled with the low prices obtained by farmers for their harvest “gives rise to concern (about) our farmers’ ability to sustain themselves in this perilous time and their capacity to maintain their farm’s productivity in the coming crop year.”

The remarks were made by LUZONFED President Cornelio V. Torreja in a letter addressed to President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.

Mr. Torreja said the market prices for raw and refined sugar remains unaffected by the decline in farmgate prices.

“We urge the government to take a direct hand in ensuring that our

farmers get fair, reasonable and sustainable returns on their hard work and provide enough incentives to continue sugar production in the interest of food security,” he added.

He said government intervention should be “considered seriously” to keep farming viable during the current crop year.

Earlier, the United Sugar Producers Federation of the Philippines urged the government to intervene due to the continued decline of raw sugar prices compared to retail prices, according to its President Manuel R. Lamata.

Mr. Lamata added that sugar prices have declined to P2,300-P2,500 per 50-kilogram bag, which is below production cost levels.

The Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) had projected that trading prices for raw sugar would stay at P3,000 per 50 kilo bag.

Separately, planters from the Sugar Council also urged the government to adopt measures to arrest the drop in sugar farmgate prices and “bring retail prices to more reasonable levels.”

Apparel named top item for Christmas gifting — study

MORE THAN 70% of respondents said they plan to buy apparel as Christmas gifts this year, according to a study conducted by market research and survey software firm Milieu Insight.

In a survey conducted between Nov. 28 and Dec. 1, Milieu found that 75% of 500 respondents in the Philippines cited apparel as their choice for gifting, while 49% cited toys and hobby products, while 43% said they plan to give groceries, food and beverages.

Singapore and Thai respondents also returned similar results, with apparel, groceries, food and beverages as their top choices for Christmas gifts.

“Christmas in the Philippines is not just a day; it’s a season that starts early. A staggering 9 out of 10 Filipinos are fully immersed in the holiday spirit, with Christmas decorations adorning malls as early as September,” Milieu said in a statement.

“This enthusiasm sets the tone for a festive atmosphere that lasts for months, making the Philippines a true Christmas wonderland,” it added.

Over 50% of the respondents from the Philippines said they plan to shop for gifts this season, against 46% of Thais and 31% of Singaporeans.

“The variation in preparedness highlights cultural differences in ap-

proaching the holiday season,” Milieu said.

Around 90% of Filipinos said that they personally celebrate Christmas as opposed to 47% and 51% of Thais and Singaporeans, respectively.

“82% of Filipinos are the most excited for Christmas as compared to Singaporeans (62%) and Thais (53%),” the research firm said.

Meanwhile, the study showed that 32% of Philippine respondents are planning to buy more gifts this year compared to last year, while 31% said they will be buying less. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

WTO asks G20 to roll back trade restrictions

WORLD Trade Organization (WTO) Director General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala said G20 economies need to unwind recent and longstanding restrictions in the face of still-weak trade growth.

In its 30th Trade Monitoring Report, WTO said that G20 economies introduced more trade-restrictive measures between mid-May and mid-October.

“During the review period, trade-facilitating measures were estimated at \$318.8 billion (down from \$691.9 billion in its report in July) and trade-restrictive ones at \$246 billion (up from \$88 billion),” WTO said in a statement.

The members of G20 are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, the UK, and the US.

Newly introduced trade restrictions by G20 economies also exceeded the monthly average of 9.8 during the period, while longstanding G20 import restrictions in force showed no sign of being rolled back, the WTO said.

The WTO estimates that as of mid-October, \$2.29 trillion worth of traded

goods, equivalent to 11.8% of the G20 imports, were affected by restrictions implemented since 2009.

It added that there were still 75 export restrictions on food, feed and fertilizers in place globally.

“Export restrictions have become more prominent since 2020, with a series of measures introduced first in the context of coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) and more recently of the war in Ukraine and the food security crisis,” WTO said.

The WTO said that COVID-19-related measures further decelerated during the review period as 82.9% of G20 COVID-19 trade restrictions had been repealed, leaving only 11 export restrictions in place with the impact on trade at \$15.1 billion.

Asked to comment, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said in a Viber message that restrictions have had a negative impact on Philippine exports, particularly of semiconductor products.

“This is because the US would like to increase its capacity on electronics and reduce reliance especially on China amid the trade war and geopolitical tensions,” Mr. Ricafort said.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) reported that electronics

products posted the sharpest decline by value in October.

In October, electronics exports declined 28.9% year on year to \$3.62 billion.

Mr. Ricafort said such restrictions were an offshoot of the US-China trade war, with economies possibly seeking to slow growth in an effort to bring inflation back under control.

“Some level of protectionism increased over the past five years especially since the Trump Administration to create more US jobs that had been lost to lower-cost countries,” he said.

“Reciprocal and similar protectionist inclinations were seen since then to protect some developed-country jobs and industries, as aggravated by the pandemic,” he added.

However, he said restrictions are likely to have tapered down due to major free trade agreements (FTAs).

“These protectionist tendencies remained overshadowed by the large FTAs, especially in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which is the world’s largest FTA,” he added.

Aside from seeking more FTAs, Mr. Ricafort said that the government should also help exporters diversify their export markets. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**



Aboitiz Power Corporation (AboitizPower) joined industry experts from Japan and the ASEAN region in a session held in Tokyo that discussed energy transitions in Asia through the Asian Zero Emission Community (AZEC). AZEC is a platform consisting of Asian countries that are promoting decarbonization that aim for energy transitions tailored to each country’s circumstances. AboitizPower President and CEO Emmanuel Rubio (rightmost) highlighted the importance of balancing decarbonization goals with the need for energy security, emphasizing the role of both in furthering economic growth and development. Specifically, the executive pointed to the need for a more diverse Philippine power mix and a sufficient and reliable transmission network. Photo is courtesy of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) of the Government of Japan.



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JOB OPENING

2 Senior Business Operations Analyst

- Bachelor’s degree in business, accounting, IT, or any related field
- Proven experience as a business operations analyst
- Native speaker of Bahasa Indonesia and Malay dialect
- Fluency in English and Mandarin

2 Assistant Business Operations Lead

- Candidate must possess at least Bachelor’s/College Degree in Finance/Accountancy or equivalent.
- At least 2 to 4 years Working Experience
- Assist the Section Head with daily operations.
- Must be a native speaker of at least two of the ff languages (Bahasa Indonesia, Vietnamese, Malay, Mandarin, Hookien, Cantonese, Hakka, Min Nan and Thai)

2 Business Operations Analyst

- Candidate must possess at least Bachelor’s/College Degree
- At least 2 to 3 years Working Experience
- Provide accounting and financial services for the company and its worldwide clients.
- Native speaker of Bahasa Indonesia and Malay dialect
- Fluency in English and Mandarin

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Email: manilarecruitment.fssbu@cappgemini.com & bsvrmanila.ph@cappgemini.com
Position: Senior Associate (1)
Process: Cash Application
Language: Thai

Permanent / Full-Time

Role Overview:
The Cash Application Senior Associate handles cash applications, deductions & customer account-clearing activities.
As a member of the team, participates in meeting service levels, and key measurement targets of the team and delivers a high-quality and cost-effective service. Is proactive in ensuring the delivery of a customer-focused service to clients. The Senior Associate should have a strong proficiency in Thai Language both written and oral. Focuses on in-depth process knowledge including but not limited to technicalities on tools like SAP and Excel.

Qualifications:

- Preferably bachelor’s degree with Business and Finance background Advanced Excel
- Skills
- At least 3 years of relevant experience
- Excellent English Communication Skills
- Fluent in Thai written and oral

Position: Manager (5)
Role: Project Release Manager – Functional

Permanent/Full-Time

Role Overview:
Working with clients to gather business requirement, setup workshop with the product team and development team.
Analysing and understanding the BRD requirements and effectively communicating the requirements to relevant stakeholders.
Perform configuration changes based on the requirements.
Review test case results by validating evidence for signoff.
Project release planning, scheduling, cross-functional team coordination including development, testing, and operations then execution of software releases and updates.
Change management, change management, Version Control management, Incident management, Environment management, Continuous Improvement, Stakeholder engagement & communication.
Agile Methodologies: Agile and DevOps practices, including continuous integration, continuous delivery (CI/CD), and iterative development process implementation.
Payments Project implementation in End-to-End Testing activities and Life cycles.
Handles payments banking operations process and ISO20022 implementation projects.
Establish strong collaborative working relationships with cross matrix stakeholders, at all levels, across the organization.

Qualifications:

- 15+ years of experience working in an IT Organization as part of a Banking group in the role of Project Manager/Lead.
- Able to manage and lead back-to-back delivery of complex Banking, Finance & Insurance transformation solutions with geographically distributed team in the role of Project Delivery Manager, Release Manager, Engagement Manager.
- Experiences in multi-country implementation of leading Payments Product at large banks.

Position: Senior Manager (5)
Role: Delivery Manager – Functional

Permanent/Full-Time

Role Overview:
Gather business requirement, setup workshop with the product and development team.
Analyses BRD requirements and effectively communicate to relevant stakeholders.
Coordinates with team members for on track project requirements, deadlines, and schedules.
Identify and resolve issues.
Submits project deliverables that adhere to quality standards.
Prepares status reports by gathering, analysing, and summarizing relevant information.
Establish effective project communication plans and execution.
Facilitating change requests.
Coordinating the development of user manuals, training materials, and other documents.
Conducting post-project evaluation.
Coordination with vendor, Teams and other stakeholders.

Qualifications:

- 15+ years of experience working in an IT Organization as part of a Banking group in the role of Project Manager/Lead.
- Able to manage and lead back-to-back delivery of complex Banking, Finance & Insurance transformation solutions with geographically distributed team in the role of Project Delivery Manager, Release Manager, Engagement Manager.
- Experiences in multi-country implementation of leading Payments Product at large banks.
- With knowledge and experience in Agile methodologies and waterfall.