

PEZA targets Middle East investors

THE Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) said that it is hoping to attract Middle Eastern investors involved in the agri-business, logistics, and economic zone (ecozone) development businesses.

In a statement over the week-end, PEZA said the new approach was the result of a meeting with the Foreign Trade Service Corps (FTSC) Middle East Team officers last month to discuss possible collaboration.

“The diversification of the Middle East away from oil to agriculture and manufacturing presents an opportunity for the Philippines to position itself as an attractive destination for more Gulf investors,” PEZA said.

“Among the sectors to be prioritized by PEZA and FTSC are agribusiness, logistics, and ecozone development,” it added.

According to PEZA Director General Tereso O. Panga, 15 Middle Eastern companies are currently registered with the investment promotion agency.

“These generated more than P600 million in investments and over 5,500 direct jobs,” he told *BusinessWorld* via Viber.

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) has said that negotiations are underway for the country’s first free trade agreement (FTA) with a Middle Eastern country — the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Expected to be concluded by October, the Philippines-UAE Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement is expected to provide the Philippines access to other Gulf Cooperation Council states.

The Philippines and the UAE have concluded the first two rounds of negotiations for the FTA, while the third and fourth rounds are expected to start this month and in October, respectively.

Aside from the FTSC Middle East Team, PEZA also met with trade officers based in California, South Korea, Taipei, New York, and Toronto.

PEZA expects investment pledges of between P200 billion and P250 billion this year, with first-half approvals at P45.48 billion.

According to Mr. Panga, PEZA did not hold a board meeting last month and is scheduled to meet on Aug. 7. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

June WESM prices fall on decreased demand

ELECTRICITY spot prices dropped in June, with a decline in power demand offsetting any impact on prices of lower supply, according to the Independent Electricity Market Operator of the Philippines (IEMOP), citing preliminary data.

IEMOP reported that the average power price at the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) system-wide fell 3% month on month to P5.97 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) in June.

Supply fell 3.9% to 18,867 megawatts (MW), while demand fell 4.9% to 13,989 MW.

For Luzon, the average WESM price fell 0.9% to P5.92 per kWh compared to May.

The sub-grid’s power supply declined 3.8% to 13,340 MW while the demand dropped 4.9% to 10,142 MW.

Spot prices on the Visayas fell 12.4% month on month to P7.50 per kWh.

Supply fell 9.3% to 2,105 MW. Demand decreased 5.4% to 1,894 MW.

Mindanao spot prices rose 1.3% month on month to P4.67 per kWh.

Supply fell 1% to 3,421 MW while demand declined 4.5% to 1,952 MW.

“The supply-demand scenario in Mindanao (was affected by) some baseload plants that (had) undergone outages. This resulted in a minimal increase in price,” the IEMOP said.

IEMOP operates the WESM, where energy companies can buy power when their long-term contracted power supply is insufficient for customer needs.

Last week, the Energy Regulatory Commission lifted the suspension on settlement in the reserve market.

It ordered the IEMOP to recalculate the resulting reserve trading amounts for the billing periods February and March. It also ordered the IEMOP to adjust the value for the remaining 70% for the March billing month.

The reserve market allows the system operator to procure power reserves from the WESM to meet the reserve requirements of the energy system. — **Shelden Joy Talavera**

Final El Niño agri damage estimate at P15.3 billion

FARM DAMAGE caused by El Niño was P15.3 billion, according to the final estimate issued by the Department of Agriculture (DA).

In its final farm damage bulletin, the DA said El Niño had affected 333,195 farmers and fisherfolk, resulting in crop losses amounting to 784,344 metric tons (MT).

The DA added that affected farmland spanned 270,855 hectares, with 68% or 184,182 hectares deemed recoverable.

Damage to the rice crop amounted to P5.93 billion, or 38.8% of the total. Lost volume was 330,717 MT, across 109,481 hectares of farmland.

The DA said that the most affected provinces were Palawan, Iloilo, Camarines Sur, and Occidental Mindoro.

Damage to corn totaled 327,310 MT, valued at P5.94 billion. This made up 38.84% of the overall damage caused by El Niño.

The DA said most of the damage and losses to corn and rice

were to plants in the reproductive and mature stages.

It added that volume losses for high value crops amounted to 112,681 MT across 270,885 hectares of farmland. The losses were valued at P3.27 billion, or 21.35% of the total.

Damage to livestock and poultry was P37.97 million, affecting 25,547 animals including chicken, cattle, carabao, duck, goat, horse, sheep, and swine.

El Niño’s impact on fisheries totaled P53.44 million, with lost volume at 11,217 MT, affecting 2,679 fisherfolk.

In June the government weather service, known as PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration), announced the end of El Niño after conditions in the tropical Pacific returned to El Niño Southern Oscillation neutral levels, meaning neither El Niño nor La Niña was in effect. — **Adrian H. Halili**

Rule VI. Selection of Regional Program Implementation Task Force Representatives and National Program Policy Task Force (NPPTF) Members

Section 23. Qualifications, Term and Selection.

Pursuant to Section 12.4.1 of Joint Department Circular No. JDC2022-11-0002, otherwise known as the LPG Cylinder Exchange, Swapping, and Improvement Programs and its Implementing Guidelines:

- (a) There shall be an RPITF per Administrative Region consisting of the selected Sectoral chairs;
- (b) Each RPITF shall be headed by a chair and two (2) alternates which shall be referred to as the RPITF representatives;
- (c) An RPITF chair belonging to the same company shall be selected only to represent one (1) Administrative Region despite being a voting Sectoral chair in several Administrative Regions. In view of this limit, if an RPITF chair belonging to the same company is selected in more than one (1) Administrative Regions, such chair shall relinquish the other Administrative Regions and the affected RPITF shall select another RPITF chair;
- (d) The RPITF chair shall be given a fixed three (3) - year term unless sooner replaced by a majority vote of no confidence by the voting Sectoral chairs in which case a new selection shall be conducted. The RPITF chair shall be eligible for multiple terms;
- (e) The RPITF shall proceed to the selection of its chair. Only a voting Sectoral chair shall be allowed to run as an RPITF chair however all Sectoral chairs shall be allowed to vote. The selection shall be confirmed through an RPITF resolution;
- (f) The RPITF shall be co-chaired by the duly designated official of the DOE and DTI Secretaries with at least a rank of Director and an alternate with at least a rank of Assistant Director. In the case, however, of DOE FOs, alternate to the FOs Director shall be the Division Chief of the Energy Industry Management Division;
- (g) The DOE, DTI and each of the voting Sectoral chair shall be entitled to one (1) vote in the selection of RPITF chair. In case however of a tie, the DOE shall exercise a deciding vote; and

The RPITF chair shall have the authority to appoint/designate his/her two (2) alternates. In all cases, an appointment/designation notification letter shall be submitted within ten (10) calendar days after date of appointment to the chair of the NPPTF for dissemination to the NPPTF members. No official assumption of the alternates shall be recognized by the NPPTF members without compliance to the submission of the notification letter.

Section 24. Voting and Non-Voting Members of the RPITF.

The classification of the Sectors shall be as follows:

- (a) Voting members:
 - (1) Refiner - Marketer;
 - (2) Direct Importer - Marketer;
 - (3) Refiller - Marketer; and
 - (4) Marketer.
- (b) Non-Voting Members:
 - (5) Independent Bulk LPG Hauler;
 - (6) Independent Hauler of LPG in cylinder;
 - (7) Dealer;
 - (8) Retailer;
 - (9) Requalifier; and
 - (10) Repairer.

Section 25. Official Proceeding and Decision of RPITF.

The RPITF shall officially deliberate all matters only when there is a quorum. A quorum shall refer to the presence of the majority of the RPITF members with the chair or his/her alternate present. All decisions of the Election Committee shall be passed through majority votes of those members present. Only the voting Sectoral chairs shall be allowed to exercise the casting of votes on all proceedings of the RPITF. Non-voting Sectoral chairs shall not be allowed to vote however they shall be allowed to participate in the deliberations of the matters raised in the RPITF. In all the RPITF proceedings, the DOE, DTI and each of the voting Sectoral chair shall be entitled to one (1) vote. In case however of a tie, the DOE shall exercise the deciding vote.

Section 26. RPITF Chair Vacancy.

- 26.1.** In case of a vacancy in the RPITF chair position, the RPITF shall select the new RPITF chair.
- 26.2.** In case however of a vote of no confidence or disqualification, the RPITF shall conduct first a full investigation of such cause and decide whether the removal is warranted.

Section 27. Composition of the NPPTF members.

Pursuant to Section 12.1.1 of Joint Department Circular No. JDC2022-11-0002, otherwise known as the LPG Cylinder Exchange, Swapping, and Improvement Programs and its Implementing Guidelines:

- (a) The NPPTF shall be chaired by the DOE and co-chaired by the DTI with members consisting of all the chairs of the RPITF;
- (b) The chair shall be the Supervising Assistant Secretary of DOE - OIMB and the Alternates shall be the OIMB Director or Assistant Director;
- (c) DOE FO Directors shall be automatic members of the NPPTF. Alternate to the FO Director shall be the Division Chief of the Energy Industry Management Division; and
- (d) The co-chair shall be the duly designated official of the DTI Secretary with at least a rank of Assistant Secretary. Alternate to the co-chair shall have at least a rank of Director or Assistant Director.

Section 28. Official Proceeding and Decision of NPPTF.

The NPPTF shall officially deliberate all matters only when there is a quorum. A quorum shall refer to the presence of the majority of the NPPTF members with the chair or co-chair or their respective alternate present. All decisions of the NPPTF shall be passed through majority votes of those members present. In all the NPPTF proceedings, the DOE, DTI and each of the RPITF chair shall be entitled to one (1) vote. In case however of a tie, the DOE shall exercise the deciding vote.

Rule VII. Administrative Regions

Section 29. Compositions.

For purposes of this Circular, the following administrative regions cover the following areas:

- (a) Administrative Region 1 - Cordillera Administrative Region, Regions I and II;
- (b) Administrative Region 2 - Region III;
- (c) Administrative Region 3 - Regions IV and V;
- (d) Administrative Region 4 - National Capital Region;
- (e) Administrative Region 5 – Regions VI, VII and VIII;
- Administrative Region 6 – Regions IX, X and Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao; and
- (f) Administrative Region 7 – Regions XI, XII and XIII.

Rule VIII. Campaign for Sectoral Chair

Section 30. Campaign Period.

All candidates for Sectoral chair shall be given a non-extendible period of twenty (20) calendar days set by the Election Committee in the calendar of activities to conduct its campaign activities.

Section 31. Campaign Guidelines.

All candidates shall observe the following rules during the campaign period:

- 31.1** For printed campaign materials:
 - (a) Shall not exceed two (2) feet in length and three (3) feet in height;
 - (b) Shall be posted only on the LPG facilities or other private property of the Candidate;
 - (c) Shall be taken down within ten (10) calendar days after the end of the campaign period;

- (d) The use of glue and other similar permanent or semi-permanent adhesives shall be prohibited; and

- (e) Shall not contain any offensive, derogatory, provocative, or libelous words, images, and/or other representations.

31.2 For digital campaign materials and other forms of campaign activities:

Shall not contain any offensive, derogatory, provocative, or libelous words, images, and/or other representations.

31.3 If the printed or digital campaign materials are in violation of the above-mentioned prohibition, such shall be removed immediately *moto proprio* by the candidate. If given a removal order by the Election Committee, the order to the candidate shall include the imposition of fine and/or disqualification whichever is applicable. In-compliance to the removal order and/or non-payment of administrative fine shall be ground for disqualification.

31.4 If the campaign activity is in violation of the above-mentioned prohibition, the candidate shall *moto proprio* immediately cease and desist from such. If given a cease and- desist order by the Election Committee, the order to the candidate shall include the imposition of fine and/or disqualification whichever is applicable. Non-compliance to the cease-and-desist order and/or non-payment of administrative fine shall be ground for disqualification.

Rule IX. Conduct of Election for Sectoral Chair

Section 32. Election Day.

- (a) The election day for Sectoral chair shall be set by the Election Committee in the calendar of activities;
- (b) The voting shall be done from 8:00 in the morning up to 4:00 in the afternoon at the place/s to be designated by the Election Committee; and
- (c) The election shall be held every six (6) years thereafter consistent with the expiration of the term of the Sectoral chairs and their two (2) alternates.

Section 33. Manner of Voting.

- (a) Every voter will be given the allowed number of ballot based on the official list of voters upon signing the attendance sheet and identity verification. The registered voter shall bring a government issued identification card for verification purposes. In the case where the registered voter is a juridical entity, the authorized voter shall bring further a notarized power of attorney and original copy of Secretary's certificate as proof of the authority to vote for and in behalf of the juridical entity. The Voters and Candidates Registration Affairs Working Group shall retain a photocopy of the said identification card. power of attorney and secretary's certificate. The Election Committee shall have the authority to require other evidence to ensure the sanctity of voting; and
- (b) Every candidate on the ballot shall have a circle beside it, and the voter will shade the circle next to its chosen candidate with the use of the pen provided at the venue. The voter shall shade only one (1) circle.

Section 34. Canvass of Votes.

- 34.1.** All ballots inside the ballot box will be counted except those that have incorrect, unnecessary or confusing marks that cause inability to identify the selected candidate.
- 34.2.** The candidate that garners the highest number of votes of a Sector in an Administrative Regions shall be proclaimed Sectoral Chair.
- 34.3.** In case of a tie, a toss coin will be conducted to determine the winner.
- 34.4.** The canvass of votes shall start the day after the election day and shall be made daily and continuously from 9am to 4pm until the last ballot is counted.
- 34.5.** All candidates shall designate two (2) watchers during the canvassing who shall sign the canvass tally and witness the opening and locking of the ballot box.

Section 35. Proclamation.

The Election Committee shall immediately proclaim the Sectoral chair upon the counting of the last ballot and submission of the canvass tally duly signed by the chair of the Voters and Candidates Registration Affairs Working Group and confirmed by the Election Committee.

Section 36. Voting Venue.

The details of voting venue for all Administrative Regions shall be disseminated by the Election Committee.

Rule X. Protest

Section 37. Period to File.

Within five (5) calendar days from the proclamation of Sectoral or selection of RPITF chairs, a losing candidate may file a notarized protest with the Election Committee, citing thereof the grounds for the protest attached with the relevant

supporting documents. Failure to file any protest within the prescribed period shall be deemed a waiver to exercise said right.

Section 38. Reply.

The winning candidate shall be granted a period of ten (10) calendar days from receipt of the protest to file a notarized reply with the Election Committee, citing the response to all the grounds cited by the protestor attached with the relevant supporting documents. The period to submit a reply maybe extended for a final additional ten (10) calendar days.

Section 39. Decision of the Election Committee.

The Election Committee shall have fifteen (15) calendar days from the submission of the reply to decide on the protest. The decision of the Election Committee shall be final and unappealable. The Election Committee shall only resolve the issues raised in the protest and consider those relevant documents attached to the pleadings in deciding the protest.

Rule XI. Penal Provisions

Section 40. Prohibited Acts and Penalties.

- 40.1.** Any violations of this Circular shall be penalized under Section 38 (e) (3) of Republic Act 11592, otherwise known as the LPG Industry Regulation Act.
- 40.2.** Pursuant to Sections 29.3 and 29.4, the Election Committee may impose disqualification of candidate for Sectoral chair

Rule XII. Final Provisions

Section 41. Election Fund.

The election fund shall be sourced from the direct contribution of the LPG associations and collection from the registered voting Sectors/Marketers. The computation of the contribution and collection shall be consistent to the computed cost to conduct the entire election process as determined by the Election Committee.

Section 42. Separability Clause.

Should any provision of this Joint Department Circular be subsequently declared invalid or unconstitutional, such parts not affected thereby shall remain in full force and effect.

Section 43. Repealing Clause.

All other rules and regulations or parts thereof which are inconsistent with this Joint Department Circular are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 44. Effectivity.

This Joint Department Circular shall take effect fifteen (15) calendar days following its complete publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation and submission of a copy to the University of the Philippines Law Center-Office of the National Administrative Register (UPLC-ONAR).

Issued this JUL 0 1 2024 at the DOE, Energy Center, Rizal Drive corner 34th Street, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City, Metro Manila.



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