### DBP rice farmer credit program focused on Nueva Ecija, CAR, Pangasinan, Isabela

THE Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) said it launched new agricultural credit programs targeting rice farmers in key growing areas in northern and Central Luzon.

"Our instructions are (to tap farmers) from Nueva Ecija, Cordillera Autonomous Region

(CAR), Pangasinan, and Isabela," DBP Director Roberto V. Antonio told reporters at a briefing.

The Agri-Puhunan at Pantawid (APP) program focuses on rice farmers holding less than a hectare, who are deemed eligible to receive on credit P60,000 worth of inputs and allowances

from the DA's partner banks during the 2024 to 2025 crop year. The interest rate is 2%.

"We want to stick to one farmer, one hectare - or at a maximum of two hectares. We want to make the beneficiaries easily monitored by both the DA and the DBP," Mr. Antonio said.

The program was initially launched in Guimba, Nueva Ecija with around 5,000 rice farmers as initial enrollees. Funding of about P3 billion was allocated for the APP program.

Another eligibility requirement is that the farmer must be signed up with the DA's Registry

System for the Basic Sectors in Agriculture. The DBP is looking to enroll an initial 50,000 farmers for the program.

Farmers taking the DBP funding are also required to sell a portion of their harvest to the National Food Authority at a farmgate price of P21 per kilogram.

"We have to get everything in order before the planting season (that will produce) the main harvest," he added.

Mr. Antonio said that P32,000 will also be given to beneficiary farmers as a subsistence allowance, amounting to P8,000 for four months. - Adrian H. Halili

# Honda batting for extension of Palace order cutting EV tariffs

By Justine Irish D. Tabile

HONDA MOTOR Co., Ltd. is seeking the extension of an executive order (EO) reducing tariffs and duties on all kinds of electric vehicles (EVs) beyond 2028, saying more time is needed to grow the market.

Toshio Kuwahara, Honda vicepresident and head of Regional Operations in Asia and Oceania, did not propose a definite ending date for the EO's effectivity.

"If the Philippine government will kindly consider extending this deadline, I think it will further be positive for the automotive industry to accelerate electrification," Mr. Kuwahara said during the launch of the company's EV lineup in the Philippines late Wednesday.

On June 20, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. signed EO 62, which modified the rates of import duty on various EV products.

The EO covered the expansion of the reduced Most Favored Nation tariff rates of the products covered under EO No. 12 to other battery EVs (BEVs), hybrid EVs (HEVs), plug-in HEVs (PHEVs), and certain

parts and components. Mr. Kuwahara said that the speed of the transition to EVs in the Philippines lags the progress made in other ASEAN countries like Thailand and Indonesia.

"In the Thai market, 23% of their passenger car sales are already BEVs," he said.

He said the factors that make the Philippines a laggard include "the availability of charging stations, and the electricity cost itself."

This year, the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines, Inc. (CAMPI) is projecting the share of EVs at below 10% of the industry sales.

Honda has a global target for EVs or fuel cell EVs to constitute 40% of total sales by 2030, rising to 80% by 2035 and 100% by 2040.

Louie C. Soriano, senior vicepresident at Honda Cars Philippines, Inc. (HCPI), said Honda Philippines will have to align with the company's global targets.

"I don't think it will be the same (progress) for the Philippines ... maybe a little bit later," Mr. Soriano said on the sidelines of the event.

"We have to understand that we're just importing. So we have to push it in the Philippine mar-

(may be) the only automobile we can sell ... so we have to adapt,"

He said Honda is also planning a partnership that will lead to the installation of more charging stations in the Philippines, which aims to address the reluctance of consumers to switch to EVs.

"Of course, we're also going to support the government's direction towards electrification. That's why we're starting with hybrids, and in the future, we're going to have the BEV," he said.

"On charging stations, we are still in the process of discussing it ... because how could we introduce BEV fully to the market if we don't address these issues? So we are also going to do our part," he added.

Regarding the duration of the proposed extension, Mr. Soriano gave no timeline but said: "The objective of this EO is to lower the cost in order for the cars to be accessible to the market.

Meanwhile, Mr. Soriano said that Honda is still confident that sales this year will surpass last year's result after the industry target was upwardly adjusted last month.

"If the industry increases its target, of course you have to also the industry," he said.

"We are going to surpass (our sales last year). We still have the "ber" months, the introduction of the new model, and of course the promotions, which are all going to help," he added.

Last month, CAMPI raised its sales target to 500,000, from 468,300 initially. If realized, this will be the industry's highest level of annual sales to date and will represent a 16.3% increase from 2023.

In the first eight months, Honda Philippines was 7th in market share at 3.37%. Its sales declined 9.7% to 10,281 units in the eight months to August.

Last year, the company sold 16,645 units, accounting for 3.87% of industry sales.

On Wednesday, Honda introduced its new Honda Civic RS e:HEV which expands the company's HEV lineup along with its first two-wheeler BEV EM1 e: and new battery-powered handled products.

Honda is targeting to add one dealership in Bacoor and end the year with a store network of 38.

It is targeting to start construction of three more dealerships in Paranaque, Talisay, Cebu, and Tacloban.

## Jobs lost to AI overseas could mean more work for PHL, BPO industry says

THE PHILIPPINES could emerge as a beneficiary of job cuts overseas due to artificial intelligence (AI), an industry group said, noting that outsourcing might actually accelerate hand-in-hand with the AI trend

Most reports about job losses in relation to AI adoption are written from a foreign perspective, Dominic Vincent D. Ligot, head of AI and research at the IT and Business Process Association of the Philippines, told BusinessWorld on Thursday.

"On jobs, remember most reports about job losses are written from the perspective of Western countries like the US, UK, Canada, and Australia, which actually helps the outsourcing trend to countries like India and the Philippines," Mr. Ligot, who founded Cirrolytix Research Services, said via Viber.

"We are usually the beneficiaries of these job losses abroad, and to maximize this, we should incorporate technologies like AI into our labor force skills to make the Philippines a more ideal destination for new work," he added.

A report by the Institute for Management Development (IMD) World Competitiveness Center found that as AI systems become more adept at handling tasks performed by humans, such as data analysis and customer service, economies will experience job security disruptions.

"All in all, AI could drastically alter the workforce through its potential to replace it, a fact that raises important questions about the effects and the repercussions on talent competitiveness," said José Caballero, a senior economist at the IMD World Competitiveness Center.

"Additionally, incorporating AI into the workforce can introduce new forms of discrimination, such as biased algorithms, that may reinforce existing inequalities and have broader social impacts on marginalized communities," he said.

He added that the increasing use of AI in hiring, promotions, and performance evaluations also raises concerns about fairness and accountability.

The report showed that 12% of the executives see AI is replacing existing tasks, leading to a reduction in the workforce, while 7% think AI is leading to employees quietquitting or opting for early retirement.

Citing International Labor Organization's research, IMD said "that high-income economies are more likely to experience significant disruptions during the AI adoption phase than low-income economies, but they are also expected to obtain greater overall benefits."

It said only 0.4% of jobs in low-income countries are at risk of AI-led automation, while the corresponding forecast is 5.5% in high-income countries.

It added that the concentration of AI-related job losses in female-dominated occupations could dampen the progress made in increasing women's participation in the labor market.

Asked about the readiness of the Philippines to adopt AI, Mr. Caballero said that the Philippines is handicapped by a dearth of talent.

He said however that the percentage of graduates in sciences — ICT, engineering, math, and natural sciences is improving, pointing to the easier adoption of AI in the

The report ranked the Philippines 52<sup>nd</sup> in terms of readiness by assessing the quality of the skills in a country's talent pool, out of 67 countries.

Mr. Ligot said that these rankings contradict other findings.

"The recent World Bank report puts the Philippines in 4<sup>th</sup> place in terms of AI traffic and corroborates reports by LinkedIn that say the Philippines is ahead of the global average in terms of AI adoption," he said.

"The data is mixed, which suggests that despite the challenges, the Philippine workforce is very keen to adopt AI and that if the public and private sectors make the necessary investments, we can reap the potential of this new technology," he added.

executive director of the Asian Institute of Management Rizalino S. Navarro Policy Center for Competitiveness, said the country needs to improve the skills being developed in schools.

"The future workforce will need to learn how to work with advanced digital technologies," Mr. Francisco said via e-mail.

"We haven't even quite unlocked the full potential of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and digital automation, and now we are faced with some are calling the Fifth Industrial Revolution, that will require the workforce to collaborate with AI and machines," he added.

He said that the way forward is to find out how people can do a better job while working with AI or robots.

"Being a largely service-sector-driven and labor-abundant economy, we need to invest in equipping our current workforce and preparing our future workforce for this type of human-machine collaboration to leverage the much-needed potential productivity gains," he added. - **Justine Irish D. Tabile** 

#### ERC's Dimalanta warns some co-ops may be affected by delays

DELAYS in the Energy Regulatory Commission's (ERC) proceedings may affect power rates for some electric cooperatives (ECs) pending the appointment of an acting chair to lead the decision-making on pending power supply contracts, suspended chairperson Monalisa C. Dimalanta said.

Ten days after her suspension, Ms. Dimalanta said in a briefing on Thursday that around 23 sale Electricity Spot Market (WESM), which is vulnerable to price volatility.

The WESM is the trading floor that such ECs turn to if their contracted power supply proves inadequate. Spot market commodities are typically more expensive than markets where delivery is arranged far in advance, as with the Power Supply Agreements (PSAs) used by the power industry.

She had given instructions to the commission's technical staff to check whether the ECs with high exposure have pending PSAs for approval "so we could bump up the approval to limit or avoid WESM exposure of the ECs."

"If they continue to be exposed, there is risk that their rates will be higher." she said.

In an order dated Aug. 27, the Ombudsman suspended Ms. Dimalanta for six months without pay over a complaint filed by the National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms, Inc. (Nasecore).

The allegations involve grave misconduct, grave abuse of authority, and conduct prejudi-

Nasecore claims that the ERC "failed to recalculate the rate of Meralco (Manila Electric Co.) that protects the interest of the public and runs counter to the objective of the ERC's Performance Based Regulation."

Ms. Dimalanta said she was expecting to receive a resolution from the Ombudsman on her motion for reconsideration within the week, or five days from filing.

She said that the grounds for her suspension are moot as the commission has decided on the matter raised in the complaint against her.

She said that the ERC decided to dismiss the rate application and "consider the fifth

regulatory period (5RP) as a lapsed period."

This means that Meralco's rate will remain unchanged until the end of the years covered by the rate reset. "On Aug. 21, the Commission voted, 3-2,

and I was part of the two that dissented, along with Commissioner Maceda. Our dissent vote was that there needs to be a proper reset for the fifth regulatory period, which is the 2022 to 2026 period of Meralco," Dimalanta said.

"My point was it is the job of the regulator to do the reset. There hasn't been a reset in 10 years, so why should we let go of our job to reset for a period that is yet to lapse," she added.

Asked to comment, Meralco said it has yet to receive the copy of the decision.

It added however that "based on ERC Rules. which require that the rate application of distribution utilities must be based on the forecast of their annual revenue requirements in the next four years, the 5th RP Application of Meralco should have been decided by ERC before the start of the 5RP on July 1, 2022," the power distributor said. - Sheldeen Joy Talavera

#### **JOB VACANCY**

**Company Name and Address AMERICAN POWER CONVERSION CORPORATION (A.P.C) B.V** Lot 1 Block 5 Phase 2, Cavite Economic Zone,

Contact details of the Company
ANN VIRGIL ARANEL | annvirgil.aranel@se.com
Job Position PURCHASING SUPPORT SPECIALIST Available Job Vacancy (1)

#### Job Description

 Provide administration support relating to contractor questions and on boarding on to SAP MDG and Navision with VMD Team requested by the purchasing team. This includes:

- Resolving queries from MDG and VMD finance teams to local
- Responding within agreed SLA of purchasing team requirements
   Coordinating activities of information gathering needed for smooth on boarding to SAP MDG and Navision with VMD Team.
   Clear communication of expectations from contractors and global finance teams
- Manage exceptions of purchasing stakeholders Leadership
- Finance, Projects, Systems, Tendering
  Direct accounts questions to the MDG and VMD finance team Facilitate the feedback survey to stakeholders of process and
- implement 'room for improvement' activities
  Responsibility of Identification of all existing suppliers that are already registered in SAP-MDG -Frame agreements KPI
- Track existing contracts & SSL
  Help to register strategic suppliers in SSP-SRM (Procurement

#### Support different tasks on SAP Assist Team Manager in any issue in first instance and escalate

#### **Basic Qualification** Bachelor Degree in Business Administration or equivalent

- Minimum of 2 years experience in vendor creation process an advantage
- Knowledge in ERP system such as SAP
   Familiarity with computers and related software (MS Office) Flexibility and willingness to work additional hours during high
- peak volume times during each quarter.

  Organizational and problem-solving skills with attention to detail is highly desired.
- Strong verbal and written communication skills with the ability to work independently and handle multiple tasks at the same

**Monthly Salary** PHP 36,000.00 monthly base pay and PHP 55,000.00 monthly language premium allowance

· Fluency in English, both verbal and written, is require

### South Africa studying PHL model in globalizing maritime labor force

**FULL STORY** 

Read the full story by

scanning the QR code with

your smartphone or by

typing the link

SOUTH AFRICA is looking at Philippine maritime industry practices to globalize its own maritime workforce, according to a South African academic. "The state is often an active agent of glo-

balization, it can influence the trajectories and the directions in which globalization takes," said Shaun Ruggunan, professor in the School of Management, IT, and Governance, College of Law and Management at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in

"We see with the Filipino state, that it has successfully managed to make Filipino seafarers dominant in the seafaring labor market, thereby shaping some of the trajectory of globalization," he said during a University of the Philippines Diliman School of Labor and Industrial Relations event late

> Wednesday. He said South Africa is "really" interested in the Philippine model, specifically the labor-for-export

> He noted South African unemployment is close to 50%. In his province of KwaZulu-Nata, one out of three are unemployed. - Chloe Mari A. Hufana

# Agricultural damage from recent storms tops P107 million

AGRICULTURAL DAMAGE from recent tropical cyclones working in tandem with the effects of the southwest monsoon was estimated at P107.42 million, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

Citing initial reports, the DA said Tropical Cyclones Ferdie, Gener, and Helen affected 1,372 farmers and fisherfolk.

The initial reports were filed at DA regional field offices in Mimaropa and the Western Visayas. Volume losses were estimated at 4,749 metric tons (MT) across 1,547 hectares of farm area.

Rice sustained most of the damage at 91.5% of the total. Lost volume was estimated at 4,340 MT valued at P98.3 million, with the damaged areas spanning 1,536 hectares.

"Most of the damage and losses were to rice in the reproductive and maturity stages," the DA said, noting that the reports are subject to validation.

Lost corn volume was 336 MT, with most of the crops in the reproductive and maturity stage. The losses were valued at P6.06 million, affecting 91 hectares of farmland.

Damage to high-value crops was valued at P2.99 million, with lost volume of 74 MT, spanning 19 hectares.

The recent tropical cyclones also resulted in the loss of 14 head of livestock, including chicken, swine, and goat, valued at P29,000.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu-Laurel, Jr. has said that overall farm production could be affected by the increased number of storms expected to enter the Philippines during La Niña.

The government weather service, known as PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration), reported a 55% probability that La Niña will occur during the fourth quarter, lasting until early 2025. - Adrian H. Halili