FAST Logistics to build support kiosk in Nueva Vizcaya

FAST LOGISTICS GROUP seeks to set up the first logistics support kiosk in Nueva Vizcaya to aid farmers and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) in northern Luzon.

The kiosk, the first of its kind in the Cagayan Valley region, would be built inside the OTOP Store in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya, the company said in a statement at the weekend.

It was formalized through a memorandum of partnership agreement signed last week by FAST Chief Executive Officer for Logistics Manuel L. Onrejas, Jr. and provincial officials.

"The initiative aims to ease transport bottlenecks and help agricultural producers and MSMEs reach bigger markets by providing a full suite of logistics solutions — including transport, warehousing, cross-docking, last-mile delivery — along with direct linkages to institutional buyers in urban centers," FAST said.

The kiosk will serve as a drop-off and consolidation point for MSME products from Aritao to surrounding areas. FAST will help transport these products to key markets like Metro Manila.

The Trade department supports about 3,000 MSMEs in the province.

"Our partnership with FAST Logistics opens new opportunities for MSMEs in Aritao and nearby towns to grow and reach bigger markets," Aritao Municipal Mayor Remelina Peros-Galam said in the statement.

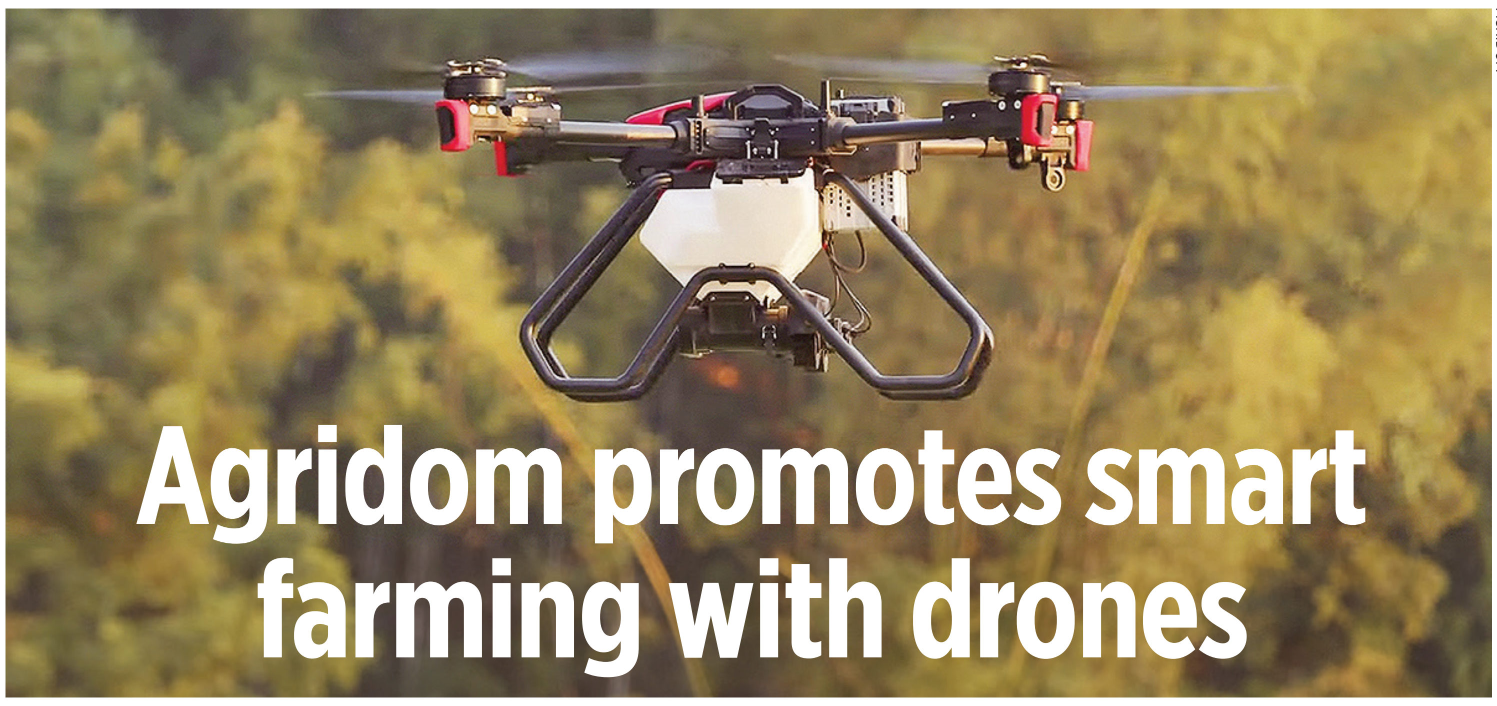
The initiative will also help transport farm products from the province, which is the "Ginger Capital of the Philippines" and "Citrus Capital of Luzon."

Many of its local farmers grapple with logistical barriers that cut their profitability and lead to food wastage.

"Logistics should be an enabler, not a barrier, so we are making it easier for fresh produce to reach institutional buyers and larger markets," Mr. Onrejas said.

FAST added that it is exploring ways to support the Aritao Cold Storage Facility and the Aritao Agricultural Trading Post. It is also looking to provide locals with logistics training and employment opportunities.

"We will continue to work with our partners to help build a more resilient food supply chain," Mr. Onrejas said. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**



AGRIDOM

Agridom promotes smart farming with drones

By Edg Adrian A. Eva
Reporter

AGRIDOM SOLUTIONS, INC. uses advanced drones to help local farmers overcome field challenges, leading to higher yields and increased profits.

"We saw an opportunity to help farmers and the agriculture industry modernize and keep up with our neighboring countries," Agridom Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Dominador L. Subang said in an interview. "When we did the market research, most of the pain points of farmers were, No. 1, their bottom line — low income."

"Second is hard labor... Farming, as most people know, is a very laborious endeavor. And next is the safety of the farmer, as they are exposed to harmful chemicals. With our solution, we can address all those issues," he added.

The Philippine agricultural tech startup's flagship product features artificial intelligence (AI)-equipped drones and services, giving farmers the option to either buy the equipment or avail themselves of drone-assisted solutions.

These include unmanned aerial and ground vehicles equipped with real-time mapping, terrain sensing and fully autonomous systems.

The drones can perform precise spraying, spreading and high-definition crop mapping, enabling smart farming for high-value crops like rice.

This helps farmers reduce manual labor, minimize exposure to chemicals such as pesticides and fertilizers, and improve yield and profit.

"When you observe farming practices, especially traditional ones, we just broadcast the fertilizer — even the seeding — randomly," Mr. Subang said. "But with drones, it's autonomous, automated and mapped."

Rice fields integrated with Agridom's smart farming solutions have posted an average yield increase of 30%, a 20% reduction in labor costs, a 30% decrease in chemical use and as much as 90% in water savings, according to the startup.

Mr. Subang said they want to make their technology both affordable and farmer-friendly, offering drone spraying services for rice fields at rates as low as P750 per hectare.

To date, the agri-tech company has worked on 12,000 hectares across 14 regions.

The CEO said they plan to expand and enhance their technology to help more farmers increase their income and reduce their workload.

He added that this could eventually lead to attracting a new generation of farmers, as the long-held notion that farming is backbreaking work could now be dispelled through technology.

"People should realize that farming, when done properly, is profitable," Mr. Subang said.

Farmers and fisherfolk are the poorest in the country, according to a 2023 report by the local statistics agency.

Mr. Subang said he is optimistic that in three to five years, smart technology like drones would become the norm in agriculture, helping more farmers and boosting food security.

PMI,
from S1/1

NEW ORDERS

In June, S&P Global said Philippine manufacturers reported a further rise in new orders.

"The pace of growth was slightly stronger than that recorded in the previous month, although it remained below the long-run survey average. Anecdotal evidence attributed this latest uptick to successful customer acquisitions, improving underlying demand trends, and effective promotional efforts," it added.

S&P Global noted that production levels returned to expansion territory, although "only fractionally." This was a reversal of the marginal contraction seen in May.

"The rate of output growth lagged the increase in incoming new business," it said.

Manufacturers ramped up purchasing activity in response to better demand.

However, Ms. Baluch noted that delayed delivery times for inputs and material shortages have affected production capacity.

"Delayed delivery times for inputs and material shortages also meant that goods-producing firms in the Philippines were unable to replenish their post-production inventories effectively, reflecting the challenges faced by manufacturers in effectively expanding production amid growing demand," S&P Global said.

Meanwhile, Philippine manufacturers increased employment for the first time in four months, in response to the increased demand.

S&P Global said inflationary pressures remained historically subdued in June.

"Rates of both input price and output charge inflation were slightly slower than seen in May. Where input prices were raised, this was primarily linked by panelists to higher material costs," it said.

S&P Global noted that business confidence strengthened compared with May but was still significantly below historical levels.

"The next couple of months will be important to gauge if the sector is able to return to growth rates seen in much of last year," Ms. Baluch said.

"Lower inflationary pressures and sustained demand will in part help Filipino manufacturers to achieve this through scope for improved pricing power. However, historically muted business confidence suggests a more subdued path for the year ahead." — **A.R.A.Inosante**

SEC,
from S1/1

The law also allowed employers to claim an additional 50% tax deduction for Personal Equity and Retirement Account contributions as long as they match or exceed the employee's contribution and removed certain tax exemptions, with government-owned or -controlled corporations now generally subject to the same passive income taxes as other institutions.

"This law enhances our competitiveness in the ASEAN region and strengthens the foundations of a capital market that can thrive on the global stage," Mr. Marcos said.

Mr. Marcos said CMEPA is expected to generate over P25 billion in net revenue for the government until 2030, which could be used to fund the construction of roads, bridges, hospitals, schools, and other social safety net programs.

"But beyond revenue, CMEPA reinforces confidence. It shows that our financial system is becoming more equitable and structured for long-term stability," he said.

Mr. Marcos also urged market participants and stakeholders "to uphold transparency, fairness, and good governance."

"By working together in good faith, we can build an industry that earns the market's trust both here and abroad," he said.

Meanwhile, PSE President and Chief Executive Officer Ramon S. Monzon said the lower STT will improve the local bourse's regional competitiveness.

However, he said the lower stock tax should be complemented with other initiatives to grow the number of listed companies in the country and expand the PSE's products and services.

"A few of the upcoming initiatives which we hope will support more trading activity include the amendment of the board lot table to make investing more affordable and accessible to Filipinos, regulations for global Philippine depositary receipts, streamlined requirements for securities borrowing and lending, and introduction of derivative products such as index futures," he said.

Mr. Monzon said the PSE will also coordinate with the SEC and other stakeholders to undertake reforms that will help make the local capital market more competitive, efficient, and investor friendly.

"We must also continue to find more ways to get more people to invest in the stock market instead of spending for nonessentials or throwing their hard-earned money on online gambling," he said.

On Tuesday, the bellwether PSE index rose 0.92% or 58.91 points to 6,423.85, while the broader all shares index climbed 0.46% or 17.69 points to 3,799.36. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Borrowings,
from S1/1

A trader said in a text message that yields for the coming auctions of government securities are not expected to drop drastically as the increase in the government's borrowing program is expected.

The trader added the government will have to issue a large volume, possibly through retail bonds, to meet the higher borrowing target.

"There is still space for large retail bond offerings, especially with strong demand from local investors seeking safe returns in a moderating interest rate environment," Philippine Institute for Development Studies Senior Research Fellow John Paolo R. Rivera likewise said in a Viber message.

Regina Capital Development Corp. Head of Sales Luis A. Limlingan said in a Viber message that there was still space for large retail issuances amid "ample" liquidity, but market volatility could push yields higher.

Mr. Rivera also said market volatility stemming from global rate uncertainty, geopolitical tensions, and inflation risks could affect pricing and dampen investor appetite.

"The BTr (Bureau of the Treasury) will need to be strategic with timing, tenor, and incentives to manage costs and ensure successful take-up," he said.

Mr. Rivera added the BTr could still tap into the foreign bond market as a "mix of strategies" could be used to meet the borrowing requirement.

BTr's Ms. Almanza previously said the government is unlikely to issue another global bond this year as its foreign borrowing program is almost completed.

In January, the government raised $3.29 billion from its sale of US dollar and euro bonds.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said in a Viber message that "large" maturing Treasury bonds from August 2025-September 2025 will also drive the government to increase borrowings.

The government is looking to raise P690 billion from the domestic market in the third quarter or P325 billion via Treasury bills and P365 billion through Treasury bonds. — **Aaron Michael C. Sy**

Infrastructure,
from S1/1

The DBM also attributed the decline in infrastructure spending to lower direct payments for foreign-assisted rail projects of the Department of Transportation, as well as the releases for local counterpart funds.

These rail projects include the South Commuter Railway Project and the Metro Manila Subway Project.

For the first four months of the year, infrastructure spending rose by 3.6% to P347.6 billion from P335.7 billion in the same period in 2024.

The DBM attributed the increase in infrastructure spending to the "robust spending performance of the DPWH for the implementation of various infrastructure projects, right-of-way settlements, and payment of progress billings (i.e., partially completed works) and accounts payables."

Meanwhile, overall infrastructure disbursements inched up by 2.4% to P419.4 billion in the January-to-April period from P409.7 billion a year ago.

This includes infrastructure components of subsidy/equity to government corporations and transfers to local government units.

Analysts said infrastructure spending will likely pick up in the next few months.

"We may expect infrastructure spending to continue ramping up to boost the economy both through higher spending and employment in the construction sector, but also better economic activity comes with better infrastructure," Oikonomia Advisory & Research, Inc. economist Reinielle Matt M. Erece said.

Budget Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman earlier said infrastructure-related disbursements would likely increase after the election ban ended.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said government spending, particularly on infrastructure, would be a major contributor to overall economic growth.

"Infrastructure spending has been prioritized and increased in recent years to 5%-6% of GDP (gross domestic product), much higher vs. below 2% of GDP about 20-30 years ago," he said in a Viber message.

For this year, the government's infrastructure program is set at P1.538 trillion, equivalent to 5.4% of total output.

The Development Budget Coordination Committee earlier said infrastructure spending will be sustained at 5-6% of GDP annually.