

PEZA says ‘robust’ pipeline keeps it on pace to hit target

THE Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) said its project pipeline remains “healthy and robust,” keeping it on track to achieve its target this year after having approved 29 projects in August valued at P14.872 billion.

“What we’re seeing now is still a healthy, robust pipeline of projects — and with our expanded regional engagements, we expect strong growth momentum in the months ahead,” PEZA Director General Tereso O. Panga said in a statement on Thursday.

“With the volume of interest we are receiving and the quality of projects in our pipeline, we are

confident that the coming months will not just achieve our target for the year but also bring even greater gains for our economy and our people,” he added.

Investment approvals declined 8% year on year in August due to strong year-earlier activity after the PEZA Board met twice in August 2024, it said.

“This occurrence is common, especially as PEZA is mandated to convene as necessary to ensure that projects move forward without delay,” it added.

The new projects approved in August are expected to create 4,764 jobs and generate \$1.374 billion in exports.

Of the 29 projects approved this month, 16 involve manufacturing, five information technology and business process management, four domestic market-oriented activities, and three economic zone development ventures. One approval concerns facilities.

A majority of the applicants are expected to locate in Region IV-A, with the others setting up shop in the National Capital Region and in Regions III, VII, XI, and XII.

The latest approvals brought PEZA’s total approvals this year to P105.834 billion, up 71.54% year on year.

These consist of 179 projects, which are expected to generate 40,638 jobs and \$3.377 billion in exports.

“Year to date, investors from the Cayman Islands lead the investments by nationality, followed by South Korean, Chinese, American, and Dutch investors,” PEZA said.

Investors incorporated in the Cayman Islands provided P13.143 billion, while South Korean and Chinese investments totaled P10.765 billion and P6.152 billion, respectively.

The eight-month approvals total represents 42.3% of PEZA’s P250-billion target for the year.

— **Justine Irish D. Tabile**



Auction for offshore wind delayed to fourth quarter

THE Department of Energy (DoE) said the auction round for offshore wind projects has been delayed to the fourth quarter from the original third-quarter target.

Consultations are now ongoing regarding the terms of the fifth round of the green energy auction (GEA-5) program, Energy Undersecretary Mylene C. Capongcol added on the sidelines of the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines Energy Smart forum on Thursday.

GEA-5 will include fixed-bottom offshore wind technology, with an installation target of 3.3 gigawatts and a delivery period of between 2028 and 2030.

“For GEA-5, the target is within the year. The auction will be later this year. Once we issue the notice of auction, this will also include the Green Energy Auction Reserve (GEAR) price,” Ms. Capongcol said.

GEA-5 is expected to facilitate market access for offshore wind developers, ensuring long-term demand for their generation capacities.

She added that the power system will move towards decentralization, which an analyst said is better suited to the needs of an archipelagic country.

“We will support the energy decentralization and promote it. The department is working to improve the regulatory

framework and encourage the growth of renewable energy,” she said.

Pedro H. Maniego, Jr., senior policy advisor of Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities said decentralizing power generation and distribution are crucial for energy security due to the Philippines’ archipelagic nature.

Decentralization refers to a shift towards diverse energy sources and smaller-scale technologies that are more evenly distributed, as against large energy projects in limited locations.

The DoE reported a power generation mix of 63% coal-fired and 22% RE in 2023. The Philippines is aiming for a 35% RE share in the power mix by 2030, and 50% by 2040.

The DoE has called offshore wind vital to increasing the share of RE in the energy mix.

Ms. Capongcol expressed optimism about hydrogen exploration, with foreign companies signifying interest.

The DoE considers hydrogen a clean alternative fuel that can be used as an energy carrier to store, move, and deliver energy from other sources.

“Our study is ongoing for this. There are international companies interested,” she said.

In July, the DoE identified Zambales and Pangasinan as designated sites for possible hydrogen exploration.

— **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

DBM backs bigger LGU role in infra projects

THE Department of Budget and Management (DBM) said it will support a provision in the proposed 2026 General Appropriations Act (GAA) that gives local government units (LGUs) an expanded role in shaping infrastructure projects.

Budget Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman said she plans to propose this provision to the 20th Congress after LGUs claimed they were not consulted on a number of faulty or “ghost” projects within their jurisdictions.

“Maybe I’ll write to the Senate and the House about closer coordination with local government units for the projects,” Ms. Pangandaman told reporters on

the sidelines of a DBM event on Wednesday. “Maybe I can propose a general provision in the GAA.”

Legislators are currently investigating alleged corruption in flood control and other infrastructure projects.

Last week, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. ordered a freeze on P60 billion to P80 billion worth of infrastructure funds in the 2025 national budget after he personally inspected a river wall in Baliwag City, Bulacan which was falsely reported as completed but turned out to be non-existent.

Party-list Rep. Terry L. Ridon said the 220-meter-long reinforced concrete river wall in

Bulacan was funded in the 2025 National Expenditure Program, which served as the basis for the legislated budget.

Ms. Pangandaman said such ghost projects are “regrettable” considering the government’s limited fiscal space.

“We don’t have enough fiscal space, right, and then there are projects that actually are not being done,” Ms. Pangandaman said. “It’s really regrettable... Let’s hold (those responsible) accountable.”

The Department of Public Works and Highways is working with the Department of Economy, Planning and Development in auditing government infrastructure projects following a Presidential directive.

The Commission on Audit has also submitted its report, according to Ms. Pangandaman.

In separate remarks on Thursday, Ms. Pangandaman said her department is working on a provision in the GAA that would more tightly control infrastructure budget releases.

She added that her staff is preparing letters to be sent to the Senate President, the chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, the Speaker and the chairman of the House Committee on Appropriations.

“It should be done next week,” Ms. Pangandaman said.

She said legislators will be approached to sponsor such a provision.

— **Katherine K. Chan**



RENE H. DILAN/PPA

NFA to auction 60,000 MT of ageing rice inventory

THE National Food Authority (NFA) will auction up to 60,000 metric tons (MT) of ageing rice inventory starting next month, according to the Department of Agriculture (DA).

The auction is intended to free up warehouse space to facilitate the NFA’s domestic rice procurement operations in the face of a two-month rice import suspension, the DA said in a statement.

“We’re essentially hitting three birds with one stone: avoiding supply shortfalls, clearing space so NFA can buy more paddy from local farmers, and preventing spoilage of ageing rice,” Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiua Laurel, Jr. said.

Before the auction, government relief agencies would have the first call to buy the rice in September, NFA Administrator Larry Lacson said.

NFA stocks are classified as ageing starting on the third month after milling.

The auction will feature floor prices ranging from P25.01 to P27.96 per kilo, depending on how long the rice has been stored.

The NFA’s current reserves amount to 450,000 MT, equivalent to 12 days of demand.

The auction will try to sell off roughly 1.2 million sacks of rice — about 13% of total reserves.

With the harvest approaching, the NFA said it is pursuing optimal solutions that ensure market stability, warehouse efficiency, and support for farmers.

— **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

TC announces safeguard measures probe on corrugating medium imports

THE Tariff Commission (TC) said it will investigate imports of corrugating medium paper in preparation for the possible imposition of definitive safeguard measures.

In an advisory dated Aug. 27, the TC said it will examine the merits of imposing such measures on imports of products classified under the ASEAN Harmonized Tariff Nomenclature (AHTN) 2022 Sub-heading Nos. 4805.12.00, 4805.19.10, and 4805.19.90, affecting shipments from various countries.

Earlier this month, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) issued a department order imposing provisional safeguard duty on imports of corrugating medium.

Under the order, a provisional safeguard duty of P3,438 per metric ton was imposed on imports of corrugating medium for 200 days, to take the form of a cash bond.

The DTI found that the increased volume of corrugating medium imports substantially impaired operations of domestic producers.

— **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Alfalfa trials to support dairy industry growth

A PROJECT funded by the Department of Science and Technology (DoST) is seeking to develop varieties of alfalfa for use as forage by the dairy industry.

The project, conducted by the University of Science and Technology of Southern Philippines is evaluating nine alfalfa varieties in Misamis Oriental, the DoST’s Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development said in a statement.

While alfalfa is traditionally cultivated in temperate climates, Thailand has developed a tropical alfalfa crop, indicating the potential to grow such forage in the Philippines, it noted.

“If the project is successful in producing alfalfa, the country will have a good feed

resource for dairy animals that can potentially reduce the cost to produce milk,” Synan S. Baguio, a participant in the project, was quoted as saying.

Alfalfa is deemed the “gold standard” for dairy animals due to its superior nutritional value.

Seven varieties were sourced from subtropical regions and two from temperate climates that include Flowcote 614 QL Lucerne, Hunter River Lucerne, Upper Murray Seeds “Silverado 9,” Flowcote 914 QL Lucerne, Flowcote Sequel Lucerne, Upper Murray Seeds “Silverosa GT 7,” Upper Murray Seeds “Silverland,” Bulldog 505, and Bulldog 805.

— **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

Chinese firms to send delegation to Philippines in October

CHINESE BUSINESSES will send a delegation to the Philippines in October to explore investment opportunities, the Philippine Embassy in Beijing said.

The visit follows an investment symposium conducted by the Philippine Embassy in Beijing, the Philippine Trade and Investment Center, and the Global Investment Council (GIC) on Aug. 22, it said.

“The forum generated more interest in investment opportunities in the Philippines, and we are optimistic about a successful outcome of the investment mission in October,” according to Glenn G. Peñaranda, the embassy’s commercial counsellor.

During the forum, presentations were delivered on opportunities in electronics and smart manufacturing, green energy, digital services and economy,

infrastructure and construction, transport and logistics, tourism, and agribusiness.

Mr. Peñaranda said China is among the largest trading partners of the Philippines and a top source of investment.

“Based on investment approvals for the period January-June 2025, China was the fourth-largest source of investments,” he said.

He added that “the internationalization of Chinese enterprises is driven by their need for markets and resources for continued expansion and diversification of supply chains.”

GIC Secretary-General Lydia Liu described the Philippines as a “vigorous” market demonstrating great “vitality,” adding that “its priority industries are highly consistent with the overseas development needs of Chinese enterprises, laying a solid

foundation for bilateral cooperation.”

GIC said it will help Chinese enterprises explore opportunities in the Philippines.

Energy China sees investment potential in the power industry due to substantial renewable energy resources and a supportive policy environment, the embassy said.

“With its familiarity with the local power project development process, Energy China indicated openness to discuss investment and EPC (Engineering, Procurement, and Construction) collaborations,” it said.

In a separate statement, the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines said the Philippine delegation at the Diving, Resort, and Travel (DRT) Show Beijing 2025 compiled over P144 million in sales leads.

“DRT Show Beijing 2025 allowed us to connect with our Chinese dive market and promote the Philippines’ world-class dive experiences,” TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Margarita Montemayor Nograles said.

“We are optimistic that this will strengthen our positioning in the Asia-Pacific market and encourage more visitors to explore the richness of our dive destinations,” she added.

During the event, a business-to-business networking session was held which brought together 50 Chinese dive operators, Philippine dive resorts, and other tourism industry members for exploratory discussions.

The Philippines also received the Island Charm Award during the show for outstanding promotion of island tourism and scuba diving.

— **Justine Irish D. Tabile**