More drilling results pending from Malampaya


PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

INITIAL RESULTS from two Malampaya gas drilling programs are expected within the quarter, the Department of Energy (DoE) said in a statement on Tuesday.

It said the results are expected from two active drilling sites, the Camago-3 and Bagong Pagasa-1 wells.

A major natural gas discovery was announced this week for Malampaya East-1. The discovery lies about five kilometers east of the existing Malampaya gas resource off Palawan province.

The new discovery is equivalent to roughly 14 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity a year, enough to power about 5.7 million households, 9,500 buildings or about 200,000 schools per year.

Malampaya East-1 is the first completed well of the Malampaya Phase 4 Drilling Campaign, which also includes Camago-2 and Bagong Pag-asa 1.

"Driven by the President's marching orders for energy security, this discovery was delivered in record time. This will be marked in history as the first 100% Filipino-led indigenous gas venture," Energy Secretary Sharon S. Garin said.

In 2023, the Malampaya consortium — composed of Prime Energy Resources Development B.V., UC38 LLC, Prime Oil & Gas, Inc., and state-owned PNOC Exploration Corp. — secured a 15-year renewal of Service Contract No. 38, paving the way for the exploration and development of additional gas reserves until 2039.

Drilling the new wells at the Malampaya field started last year in hopes of producing new gas by 2026.

To ensure continuity of the country's indigenous energy supply, the government awarded nine major service contracts to explore high-potential sites in the West Philippine Sea and the Sulu Sea, as well as to continue production at the Galoc field.

The government is also banking on hydrogen exploration with two service contracts awarded.

The DoE said it obtained funding for the Philippine Gradiometry and Seismic Survey Project, a nationwide geological initiative that will generate critical data for future bidding rounds. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

First yellow alert of 2026 raised over Visayas grid


VWALAKTE/FREEPIK

THE Visayas grid was placed on yellow alert on Tuesday, the first such alert this year, following forced outages at several power plants, according to the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP).

In an advisory, NGCP said that the Visayas grid was placed on yellow alert between 5 p.m. and 7 p.m.

Peak demand hit 2,284 megawatts (MW) against the available capacity of 2,403 MW.

A total of 681.1 MW was unavailable to the grid after 20 power plants went on forced outage and 21 were running on derated capacities.

A yellow alert is issued when the operating margin falls below the transmission grid's contingency requirement, narrowing the supply-demand buffer.

"The Luzon and Mindanao grids are (operating normally)," the NGCP said.

Eight yellow alerts were raised in 2025 over the Visayas grid, while the Mindanao grid experienced one yellow alert.

The Department of Energy expects power supply in the Visayas to be vulnerable this year because of its dependence on the other two island grids.

Energy Secretary Sharon S. Garin has said that the final power outlook for this year is expected to be ready within the month. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

Two proposals accepted for Cebu BRT consultancy

THE Department of Transportation (DoTr) said it received two valid proposals for the technical consultancy contract for the Cebu Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project.

The DoTr said the accepted proposals were filed by Dohwa Engineering Co., Ltd., and Botek Bosphorus Technical Consulting Corp. A third submission by Trans-consult Ltd. was rejected due to incomplete documents.

The remaining two will undergo the next stage, which is the evaluation of their financial proposals.

The remaining phases of the Cebu BRT, designated 2A and 3A, cover 13 stations and 62 stops. These are due for completion by the end of 2028.

The government broke ground on the first package of the project in 2023. It was initially scheduled for full operations in 2025 but was pushed back to 2028.

Once completed, the Cebu BRT system is expected to serve up to 169,000 passengers per day.

According to the World Bank's implementation status and research report, the pace of Cebu BRT construction has slowed down, and major civil works packages are yet to be launched. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

Trade dep't encouraging retailers to list on PSE

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said it is encouraging retailers to list on the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) to raise funds for expansion.

"If they want to go to the stock exchange, we can assist them with that. Some are prepared for that, and some are interested in that," Trade Secretary Ma. Cristina A. Roque told reporters on Monday.

"I am also setting a meeting with the president of the PSE to discuss how brands that are already large enterprises can enter the stock exchange," she added.

She said such listings broaden the options for retailers to fund their expansions.

"That is how you can grow: either you sell some shares, you list, you get private equity, or you borrow from the bank. It is good to know all the possible options," she added.

She said PSE listing was discussed when the DTI met with the Philippine Retailers Association.

"Discussions focused on strengthening cooperation through a proposed memorandum of understanding, aimed at supporting shared goals in promoting sustainability, reducing environmental impact, and encouraging positive consumer behavior across the retail sector," the DTI said in a social media post.

"Both parties expressed support for continuing to work together and expanding these efforts nationwide," it added.

Ms. Roque said she also urged retailers to look at how they can benefit from the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises to Maximize Opportunities for Reinvigorating the Economy (CREATE MORE) Act.

"A lot of them are manufacturers also... They have thousands of stores, and some already have a presence globally," she said.

"We informed them of that because usually they think (CREATE MORE) is just for foreign investors. They do not know that it is also for local investors," she added.

She also urged retailers to tap the DTI's Foreign Trade Service Corp. for any export plans. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Special safeguard measures sought on onion, deboned chicken, meat imports

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) said it will seek special safeguard (SSG) measures on several imported agricultural products like onion, deboned chicken, and meat products.

Department Order No. 5, Series of 2026, signed by Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. on Jan. 19, requested that the Bureau of Customs apply additional duties on such products.

A price-based special safeguard measure allows the government to temporarily raise duties on specific imported products when their prices fall below set thresholds, in order to protect domestic industries from cheap imports.

Under Republic Act No. 8800 or the Safeguard Measures Act, the DA may impose SSG duties on agricultural products without a formal investigation once the trigger price is breached on a cost, insurance, and freight (CIF) basis.

The DA said monitoring by its Trade Remedies Office under the Policy Research Service showed that CIF prices of several products breached their respective trigger levels, prompting the request for safeguard duties.

The additional products covered include fresh or chilled onions, with


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a trigger price of P74.21 per kilo, and frozen mechanically deboned chicken (out of quota) with a trigger price of P93.96 per kilo.

Meat and edible meat offal salted in brine, dried, or smoked, excluding freeze-dried chicken and dried pork skin, were set a trigger price of P70.50 per kilo.

Prepared or preserved meat, meat offal, or blood of turkeys, except mechanically deboned or separated meat, were assigned a trigger price of P259.22 per kilo.

Meanwhile, other preserved meat, meat offal, or blood products, excluding those of turkey and chicken, were set a trigger price of P298.55 per kilo.

The SSG duties will be imposed on a per-shipment basis and will be determined by the difference between the actual CIF price at the time of import lodgment and the applicable trigger price. — **Vonn Andrei E. Villamiel**