

ARMM first to benefit from BIMP-EAGA fast internet

FIRST TO benefit from the BIMP-EAGA Submarine and Terrestrial (BEST) Cable Project, a high bandwidth cable system that provides cheaper telecom and internet services will be the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

BIMP-EAGA -- the Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines-East ASEAN Growth Area -- is a sub-regional grouping of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) that aims to strengthen economic ties and pro-

mote itself as a single market within the integrated ASEAN Economic Community.

The BEST Cable Project, also called the BIMP-EAGA Rink, was launched in Davao City last Aug. 19 during the three-day 3rd BIMP-EAGA Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Infrastructure Cluster Meeting.

The Rink is being undertaken by BEST Cable Corp. Pte. Ltd, a consortium composed of Brunei International Gateway Sdn

Bhd, Sabah Economic Development Corp. Communication Sdn Bhd, and Mindanao's EA Trilink Corp., which holds a telecom franchise in the ARMM.

The groundbreaking ceremony for the Mindanao link will be held in Parang, Maguindanao in the ARMM within the first quarter of 2016 and target completion date is set for 2018.

"This will make ARMM's Internet rates cheaper by two-thirds than

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Clusters urged to monitor their projects-

DAVAO CITY --- Senior adviser Tetsuo Inooka of Japan International Cooperation Agency has urged all industry clusters in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao to continue monitoring their projects and activities and update their plans if necessary to keep in step with their activity schedules.

In his opening talks with the different ARMM industry clusters during a recent Davao meeting, Inooka stressed the need for all clusters to keep mon-

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Halal congress to boost bid for world market

COTABATO CITY -- A Halal Congress in October this year is expected to help propel ARMM's bid to get a slice of the multi-billion global halal market.

Highlight of the congress will be the launching of the ARMM Halal Ecosystem (AHE), an inter-agency body that will oversee and coordinate the region's efforts to become the hub of the halal industry in the country, according to ARMM-DOST Secretary Myra Mangkabung.

Mangkabung said this congress is expected to draw

participants from all stakeholders including various government agencies, local and foreign businesses, as well as foreign dignitaries from Malaysia.

Halal products from different manufacturers will also be exhibited during the congress. Halal products are those considered to be permissible in Islam, which are entirely free of pork, alcohol and, in case of poultry and livestock, slaughtered in accordance with what is prescribed in Islam.

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SEAWEED RESEARCH. Seaweed seedlings called "sporelings" are shown to the members of the ARMM seaweed cluster team by Dr. Jumelita Romero (second from right) at the research laboratory of the Mindanao State University in Tawi-Tawi. After six months, the seaweed cultivars are transferred and grown in sea-based nurseries.

ARMM pushes growth of palm oil industry

COTABATO CITY -- High officials of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao are taking steps to boost the growth and expansion of the palm oil industry in the province of Maguindanao.

Several foreign investors, particularly Malaysians, have been making serious inquiries about investing in palm oil plantations and oil mills not only in the province but also in other parts of Mindanao.

In a recent meeting with the palm oil industry cluster team in Davao, ARMM Trade Secretary Sakiran Hajan exchanged views with the team on the

requirements of putting up an oil mill in Maguindanao.

"We know the costs of putting up an oil mill is very high but the economic benefits are also big for all our farmers growing oil palms in the province," Hajan said.

It was learned from the industry cluster that an oil mill would require around 3,000 to 5,000 hectares of productive oil palms producing 10 metric tons of palm oil round-the-clock to make it economically viable to operate in a particular area.

Hajan said he expects the palm oil industry cluster in Maguindanao to enter into a memorandum of agreement with the oil mill to make sure of good buying prices for farmers supplying the oil palm fruit bunches to the mill for processing.

A well-organized and well-managed farm cooperative of oil palm farmers and growers, according to Hajan, has a better bargaining power than an individual farmer in getting good prices from the oil mill once it is set up in Maguindanao.

Palm oil mills operating currently in Mindanao

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PHILIPPINES

Officials to study impact of clusters on provinces

COTABATO CITY -- Sizing up the economic impact of various projects of the six industry clusters to the growth of provinces in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao will help determine how much they are benefiting the people and communities in the region.

"We have to know the impact of these cluster projects to the growth of provinces in our region. We need to find out how vital these projects are to our communities," says ARMM Trade Secretary Sakiran Hajan.

In his brief opening remarks to leaders and members of various ARMM industry clusters during a re-

cent Davao meeting, Hajan stressed that by the time the ARMM Industry Cluster Capacity Enhancement Project (AICCEP) ends by next year (2016), there should be "something concrete on the ground" as the new government in place will be asking how the project went.

AICCEP is a joint project of the ARMM Depart-

ment of Trade and Industry and Japan International Cooperation Agency. This project took off after the end of the National Industry Cluster Capacity Enhancement Project (NICCEP) last March this year.

"There's a lot of improvement we need to make in running these industry clusters in ARMM. We need to improve on how we solve issues and concerns facing each industry," Hajan told the industry cluster teams.

According to Hajan, various questions facing each industry cluster also

needed to be addressed like, "how do we expedite all our programs and projects by the end of this year" or how JICA's funds and resources are used to implement projects efficiently.

"We like to see the outputs of these projects and the counterpart funds coming from partner government agencies. All the reports and expenditures from the clusters must be in detail. We have to know how well we are using these resources," Hajan said. (Philpress News)

New technology wows ARMM coconut cluster

COTABATO CITY -- New technology in coconut processing shown at the Zamboanga Research Center of the Philippine Coconut Authority, left a strong, lasting impression on members of the ARMM coconut cluster team during a benchmarking visit recently.

"It was the most impressive display of new technology in coconut processing that we ever saw during our benchmarking in Zamboanga," says Provincial Director Khalikuzaman Baraguir of the ARMM Department of Trade and Industry.

This benchmarking visit of the coconut cluster team took them all the way to San Ramon, Zamboanga

City where the Maguindanao-based group of sixteen members, set foot at PCA's Zamboanga Research Center where the latest in coconut processing technology and equipment are shown to the country's coconut growers.

"What really strike us most were the technology used to turn coconut oil into ethanol, virgin oil, etc, the solar system used to dry copra, the equipment to make furniture from coco trunks, and the decorticating machine that turn coconut husks into coco peat and coco fiber," Baraguir said.

From the PCA research center in Zamboanga, the

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JICA PROJECT coordinator Yumi Balse (right) explains some details of project coordination with ARMM Trade Secretary Sakiran Hajan (left) while JICA senior adviser Tetsuo Inooka looks on (center) during a recent monitoring meeting in Davao City.



PROJECTS



TAWI-TAWI SEAWEED industry stakeholders composed of seaweed growers, farmers, cooperatives, local seaweed council, government agencies, academe, etc and seaweed cluster officers take time out for this group shot after a whole-day consultation meeting in the island province.

MSU seaweed research to boost output, quality

TAWI-TAWI -- Test planting of high quality seaweed seedlings called "cultivars" in selected experimental seaweed farms here is expected to determine the yield of carrageenan and growth performance of these laboratory seedlings.

Seaweed cluster team leader Dr. Jumelita Romero said they have already started a "mass production" of this new cultivar in experimental farm areas in Tawi-Tawi island after a six-month laboratory production here at the research laboratory of Mindanao State University.

"After six months of laboratory production, these cultivars are now ready and viable for grow-

ing in sea-based nurseries. I think the results are good, but we have to try them out," Romero told the Cluster Bulletin.

In a laboratory tests supported by the Department of Science and Technology and the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, much smaller seedlings called "sporelings" were grown at the MSU research laboratory and observed closely by technicians as they grow by the weeks until they reach 64 days old when they are considered "matured seaweeds"

Romero admitted however that the processes are still experimental and need further tests by a de-

vice called an "analyzer" to measure the seaweed's carrageenan content, which is one of the main goals of the laboratory experiments.

"We need to look at the carrageenan content of this new type of seaweed we're developing at the lab. The value of these seaweeds depends on how much carrageenan content it has with them," Romero said.

Impressed by the project, senior adviser Tetsuo

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Farmers' coops needed to put up palm oil mill

COTABATO CITY -- Eighteen farmers' cooperatives for the palm oil industry from some 33 barangays in Maguindanao province have been organized by the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao these past few months.

Department of Trade and Industry provincial director Khalikuzaman Baraguir said the palm oil industry cluster team was "so impressed and inspired" with what they saw at the Agumil palm oil plantation and oil mill in Brooke's Point, Palawan province during their benchmarking visit, that more and more ARMM farmers are now planting oil palms and organizing themselves into cooperatives.

"To put up an oil mill in Maguindanao, Agumil wants us to organize farmers' cooperatives growing oil palms because they will deal only with coops, not with individual farmers," Baraguir said in his latest report to consultants of Japan International Cooperation Agency during a recent meeting in Davao City.

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Coco cluster eyeing SSF for new solar copra dryer

COTABATO CITY -- Old traditional ways of drying copra using crude dug-up oven using firewood in many coconut farms here and elsewhere, are expected to give way to new ways of drying copra using natural heat from the sun--- or solar dryer.

"We cannot continue using our old methods of drying copra. We need to start using a solar dryer to improve the quality of our copra and get better buying prices," says one coconut grower here.

Some coconut farmers drying their copra under the sun however use one side of the concrete national highway in this province, or even the pavement of a basketball court in

their village, but intermittent rains in the province usually leave the copra wet and exposed to dust and dirt.

The ARMM coconut cluster team included the establishment of a solar drying facility as one of their priority projects this year that includes a wooden structure with a raised floor for drying the copra and huge, thick plastic sheets covering the entire facility--- similar to the solar drying of cacao beans the cluster team saw in Davao recently.

"We're planning to set up this facility for coconut farmers as a model for them to see how copra can be dried properly and turn out high quality copra,"

says provincial director Khalikuzaman Baraguir of the Department of Trade and Industry.

Measuring 12 meters by 24 meters, the model solar dryer on concrete pavement is expected to be constructed and turned over to the industry cluster by the DTI under its successful "Shared Service Facility" program, according to Baraguir.

A well-managed cooperative of coconut growers and farmers here is being eyed to run the SSF model solar drying facility and make it self-sustainable for the ARMM coconut industry in the long run. (Philpress News)

Abaca nursery set up in Lanao del Sur

MARAWI CITY-- Land preparation activities have been conducted these past months to set up abaca nurseries in the towns of Madamba, Calanogas and Malabang in the province of Lanao del Sur.

"These are high density abaca nurseries to produce high quality abaca planting materials for our abaca farmers here" says abaca cluster chairman Pundato Alug.

By establishing abaca nurseries in the three targeted areas, abaca farmers and growers are expected to plant high quality abaca varieties that will produce quality abaca fiber in the province, according to Alug.

Each one-hectare nursery area to be set up in the three towns are expected to receive high quality abaca seedlings to be delivered by suppliers fully accredited by the Fiber Industry Development Authority (FIDA).

Alug said the abaca industry cluster has been given top priority by the FIDA in getting sufficient supply of high quality seedlings from accredited suppliers in the country.

Sustainability plans for the abaca nursery project are also being studied by the industry cluster team to figure out how each abaca nursery can earn income from the supply of quality abaca seedlings to abaca farmers and growers in Lanao del Sur.

"We want to find out how our abaca cluster team can be formally organized

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ARMM cluster to put up abaca demo farms

MARAWI CITY -- As a show window for abaca farmers in the province, the ARMM abaca industry cluster team has taken steps to establish a model abaca demonstration farm in three strategic sites in Lanao del Sur.

Abaca industry cluster chairman Pundato Alug said the three strategic sites chosen for the half-hectare "techno-demo" abaca model farms are Ganassi, Taraki and Pualas towns in the province which have the most abaca farms compared to other areas.

"This will serve as a model farm for all Maranao abaca farmers to see how abaca plants are grown properly. The best way to learn is to see how it's done," Alug said.

Farm technicians from the Department of Agriculture and the Fiber Industry Development Authority (FIDA) are expected to provide the best technology in abaca planting, harvesting and the processing of abaca fibers into different products.

"Once these farmers improve their skills and capacity to grow abaca and turn them into many kinds of products, they will produce more and earn more income," Alug told consultants of Japan International Cooperation Agency during a recent meeting in Davao.

It was also learned that FIDA also helped the abaca industry cluster in conducting a one-day orientation

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COFFEE CLUSTER chair Abdusali Ahalul raises a point during a recent JICA monitoring meeting in Davao, stressing the need to learn new ways of growing good quality coffee that are in big demand by the big buyers from multinational coffee firms.

SPOTLIGHTS



UPGRADING PLANS. ARMM Assistant Trade Secretary Abubacar Datumanong (left) urges all the cluster teams to keep monitoring their activities and upgrade their plans and projects to boost the growth and development of their industries. Seated beside him is JICA senior adviser Tetsuo Inooka (second from left).

Rubber best practices seen by Luzon, Caraga clusters

ZAMBOANGA CITY -- Best practices in rubber production as well as the latest in modern rubber technology in rubber processing were seen by two rubber industry clusters operating in Luzon and Caraga region.

In a recent report submitted by the Zamboanga-based rubber industry cluster to the Cluster Bulletin, it was disclosed that the rubber cluster team and the Quezon Rubber and Agro-Planters Association from Region 4A conducted a benchmarking visit to a rubber nursery farm in Laguna and the Yokohama Tire Manufacturing early in March this year.

At the Laguna nursery farm, the cluster team observed how the rubber seedlings are selected carefully, how they are grown and how they are planted properly at the plantation. At the Yokohama factory site, members of the cluster team were told of the strict specifications to be

followed to produce the highest standards of quality rubber at the plant.

The rubber industry cluster team in the Caraga region also conducted a benchmarking visit to the rubber industry in Zamboanga Sibugay in late June this year to see how rubber trees are grown, how the latex is tapped by workers and how the harvest is processed into cuplumps by local processors, according to the industry cluster report.

Latest equipment bought and turned over by the Department of Trade and Industry to the country's rubber industry as part of its "Shared Service Facility" (SSF) included the 1) Rubber Sheet Processing Equipment for Region 7 and Region 12; 2) and 77 units of Weighing Scales for Rubber for Region 9 distributed to Zamboanga Sibugay and Zamboanga del Norte, according to the cluster report. (Philpress News)

Solar power system to boost milkfish output

DAGUPAN CITY— Local scientists and technicians from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) may have the answer to prevent "fish kill" threats by employing solar technology that boosts milkfish production in an environment-friendly way.

Dr. Westly Rosario, chief of BFAR's National Integrated Fisheries Technology Development Center (NIFTDC) in this city, said the solar-powered mechanical Aeration System for fishponds and fish cages that grow bangus

(milkfish) is now available to fishpond operators.

The project is a joint endeavor of BFAR and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) titled "Pilot Surveys for Disseminating Small and Medium Enterprises Technologies for Photovoltaic (solar panel) Power Source for Milkfish Production."

It will be conducted for two years with the aim of eventually solving the perennial problems on neap tide that often occurs due to congestion in fish cages,

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Ph garments, handicrafts exports to rise 15%

PHILIPPINE garments and hard goods manufacturers expect their export earnings to rise by 15 percent this year following the country's recent inclusion in the European Union's new generalized system of preferences (GSP+), the Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. said.

The granting of GSP+ status by EU to the Philippines will allow local companies to export more than 6,200 product lines at zero duty. These include some of the country's most important exports such as processed fruit and foodstuffs; coconut oil; footwear; fish and textiles.

Robert Young, president of the Foreign Buyers Association of the Philippines, was quoted by Philexport as saying that the local garments and hard goods sectors were among those that would benefit from the GSP+ scheme as it would also cover footwear, garments and handicrafts.

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Lake Lanao port under construction

COTABATO CITY -- The Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) has constructed a multi-million port in Lake Lanao to improve access of lake's fishermen to local markets.

Engr. Don Mustapha Loong, ARMM public works secretary, said the construction of the PHP5 million Barimbigan Port in Ditsaan Ramanin town in Lanao del Sur is expected to be completed by October.

He said the port will provide Maranao fisher folks easy access to the market of fresh water fish from the Lake Lanao, the country's second largest lake. The lake is situated south of Marawi City in Lanao del Sur and part of ARMM. It was northwest of the Butig Mountains where the water comes.

Lake Lanao is the second largest lake in the Philippines with an area of 131 square miles (340 square km). Its outlet is the Agus River that flows north toward Maria Cristina Falls hydroelectric power plants located enroute to Iligan Bay.

According to Loong, this port project was funded out of a grant from the ARMM's 2015 infrastruc-

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Construction on Basilan, Sulu port, road projects

COTABATO CITY -- Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) officials announced recently the start of P329 million worth of seaport expansion and road projects in Basilan and Sulu.

Regional Gov. Mujiv Hataman said the projects are expected to help restore normalcy in the two provinces hounded by terrorism and violence.

Believing that development helps erase conflict, Hataman and ARMM Public Works Secretary Engr. Don Mustapha Loong signed the contracts for the projects which were awarded to winning bidders.

The projects include expansion and improvement of the seaports in Lami-

tan City in Basilan and in Jolo town in Sulu costing Php194 million and to be implemented by LG Lagas-car, Incorporated.

Also signed were contracts for the concreting of a road network in Basilan province worth Php135.8 million. It will be undertaken by the Santiago, Inc.

To ensure transparency and accountability, Hataman and Loong both urged the public, non government organizations, including the media to keep an eye on the projects.

"The public should get involved, we are spending government money and public scrutiny is necessary to avoid corruption," Hataman told reporters. "Even suspicion should

not be an issue if government projects are implemented above board."

He assured all projects in the ARMM are subjected to public bidding in accordance with Government Procurement Reform Act (GPRA) to guarantee efficiency and transparency in project implementation.

Funds for the projects were taken from the ARMM's 2015 infrastructure subsidy.

The ARMM public works office allocated Php145.5 million for the repair of Lamitan City seaport while Php48.5 million for the repair and rehabilitation of Jolo seaport and gateway.

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DA grants research fund to improve agri output

COTABATO CITY - Aware of the enormous agriculture potential of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) during the recent product trade fair in Manila, the Department of Agriculture (DA) central office granted the region a P1.5-million Research Fund.

ARMM's Agriculture department (DAF-ARMM) booth was recognized as the country's best booth by the Bureau of Agricultural Research (BAR) which prompted DA to grant the Research Fund.

The award-winning booth of ARMM showcased distinct agricultural products that included water hyacinth organic fertilizer, marang jam, marang ice cream, adlay coffee ice cream, organic rice, adlay-based delicacies processed in Maguindanao, and local delicacies such as dudol, tinagtag, panganan sising and putri mandi.

DA's Region IV-B, or Mimaropa, was awarded second place and received P1 million worth of research

grant while DA Region IV-A, or Calabarzon, received P500,000 also as a research grant.

The activity was held as part of the 11th Agriculture and Fisheries Technology Forum and Product Exhibition and as part of the 28th anniversary celebration of the Agricultural Research Bureau.

This year's anniversary celebration focused on the global competence of Philippine products and technologies generated from research and development (R&D).

Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala, former DA secretary William Dar, and BAR Director Nicomedes Eleazer graced the opening and viewing of the product exhibition.

To highlight breakthroughs and provide new perspectives on technology commercialization, the forum-exhibit showcased agricultural R&D of more than 90 exhibitors from the DA's bureaus and attached agencies and regional field offices

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Fiesta booths in Tokyo to showcase Ph products

TOKYO --- Philippine handicrafts, processed food items and services highlighting Filipino culture, art, native customs and tour packages are expected to be showcased during the coming Philippine Festival 2015 to be held at the Yoyogi Park in Tokyo, Japan on September 19-20, 2015.

Festival organizer Jenavilla Shigemizu said the coming festival aims to reach out to the Filipino community in Japan and encourage "greater appreciation and understanding of the Philippines" among the mainstream Japanese population.

"There are many Filipinos working and living in Japan. For many years they've become part of the Japanese society as they tried to learn their culture and ways of life. On this coming festival, the Japa-

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TRAVEL ACCOMODATIONS are coordinated and arranged by the JICA project coordination team during every JICA meeting. Photo shows seaweed cluster chair Annabel Sahali (left) finalizing her accomodations and travel schedules with the JICA project team in Davao.

ACTIVITIES

Palm oil company helps with technical training

COTABATO CITY --- Univanich, one of the palm oil companies operating in Mindanao, lent a hand in helping the palm oil cluster team conduct a two-day technical training on farm management to growers and farmers in the first and second district in the province of Maguindanao.

"It has helped us a lot. We've been preparing this series of technical training with the help of Univanich," says Fernando de Dios, senior trade and industry specialist of ARMM Department of Trade and Industry.

Drawing some 25 par-

ticipating growers and farmers, the training seminars included the various things the cluster team learned from their recent benchmarking trip to the Agumil Philippines oil palm plantation in Brooke's Point, Palawan, according to De Dios.

Training of the first batch of participants took place last August 15 to 17 at Tacurong, while the second batch scheduled on the fourth week of the same month was held in Parang.

De Dios said the benchmarking mission to Brooke's Point, Palawan paved the way to discover

the best method and practices in managing a nursery of oil palm seedlings.

"Our cluster team saw the drip method of watering the young oil palm seedlings used by Agumil. We also saw the bagging of germinated seeds and the prescribed size of bags to use," De Dios said.

These methods and procedures were explained in detail during the training on farm management that also included the spacing of seedlings when planted, how to apply fertilizer properly, how to prune and cut fronds, and how to

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Growing world market for coconut fiber eyed

MANILA --- In an effort to tap the growing demand for coconut coir products in the world market, members of the National Industry Cluster (NIC) for Coir, are now taking steps to establish market links with potential buyers in the US, Europe, China, Tokyo and Korea.

"There's a huge market out there. All we need to do is find these buyers and set up market linkages with them," says Marcelina Alcantara, the NIC coordinator for coconut coir.

One of their big moves is to conduct a market research, funded by the Export Market Bureau, that will cover the United States and Europe, seeking out potential buyers among hundreds of importers and department stores that sell and distributes home furnishings made of coco coir and construction companies looking for geonets for erosion control.

The coconut coir industry cluster has also tried tapping the Korean international horticulture trade fair with its own booth to promote the use of coco peat for fertilizing commercial gardens and farms in South Korea.

To boost the demand for coco peat for natural-based farming and geotextile products, the coco coir cluster is also planning to tap the Japanese market during its Tokyo International Industry Exhibit on October 2016.

"There's a lot of demand for coco peat and geotextiles in Japan. All we have to do is showcase these products over there during the trade fair and meet with possible buy-

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SEAWEED CONSULTATION meetings with the various stakeholders of the seaweed industry in Tawi-Tawi were conducted by the seaweed cluster team led by Dr. Jumelita Romero who disclosed to participants the new seaweed species being grown for them and the setting up of seaweed nurseries in the island province.

Training for seaweed farmers set Aug-Sept

TAWI-TAWI -- Series of training seminars for seaweed farmers in this southernmost island province are expected to take place during the months of August and September this year, according to seaweed cluster chair Annabel Sahali.

"We're planning to organize all these farmers formally into seaweed cooperatives after the training seminars," Sahali told consultants of Japan International Cooperation Agency during a recent meeting in Davao City.

Several meetings by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources with coastal fishermen in many seaside barangays had been held these past months to inform them of the training seminars and the need to organize themselves into cooperatives.

BFAR working together with the Seaweed Development Council and the seaweed industry cluster, wants initially to organize seaweed farmers' cooperatives in the coastal towns of Bongao, Sitangkai and Panglima Sugala

Earlier meetings were

also coordinated by the seaweed cluster team to reorganize and revitalize the Panglima Sugala Federation of Seaweed Farmers' Association and the Buan Seaweed Farmers and Producers Cooperative, according to Evelyn Martinez, cluster secretariat and BFAR officer in charge of seaweed projects.

The ARMM seaweed industry cluster had been conducting field visits these past months to the seaweed-producing seaside towns of Sibutu which has approximately 15,000 hectares of seaweed farms and Sitangkai which has around 100,000 hectares of seaweed farms, according to team leader Dr Jumelita Romero, a seaweed expert from the Mindanao State University.

"We want to enhance the capability of seaweed farmers in this province to produce high quality seaweeds in bigger volumes and to make sure every farmer here benefits from our cluster projects by earning higher income from every harvest," says Romero. (Philpress News)

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Nestle pushes for coffee industry 2016 roadmap

BAGUIO CITY --- Coffee industry leaders had been pushing the last few months for the completion and release of the 2016 Coffee Industry Roadmap by the Department of Agriculture.

Leading the push for its early completion were top officials of Nestle Philippines and the Philippine Coffee Alliance, according to a report submitted by provincial director Myrna Pablo of the Department of Trade and Industry and officer of the coffee industry cluster.

Both coffee industry officials urged a meeting between high officials of DTI and the DA to review the status of the coffee industry roadmap and figure out how the DTI can come in to help complete the project and release the roadmap by next year.

This meeting between the two government agencies to expedite the completion and release the coffee industry roadmap was expected to take place sometime in August this year.

"For the completion of this national coffee industry roadmap, the assistance of the Board of Investments is needed. Funding for this roadmap project is already available. These were part of DTI's commitment," Alcantara said.

This commitment was made by the DTI Industry Development Group assistant secretary Aldaba during the "Localization of Road Maps event" held sometime in May this year in Baguio City.

Coffee is a high priority commodity under the High Value Crops Development Program and the national combined efforts of the DA, the Department of Agrarian Reform

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JICA adviser urges clusters to upgrade

DAVAO CITY -- Industry clusters in the Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao were asked recently to "upgrade" their plans and projects to make them more effective and relevant to the provinces in the region.

Senior adviser Tetsuo Inooka of Japan International Cooperation Agency said every industry cluster in the ARMM are expected to compare their performances to their original plans and objectives they set for themselves during the last three months.

"After you compare your performances to your objectives and plans and see the need to make changes, we urge you to upgrade your plans and make them more effective to reach your objectives," Inooka told the ARMM cluster teams.

Inooka said when these

objectives are reached, this will lead to the growth and development of the industry each cluster team represents, which is the ultimate goal of the ARMM Industry Cluster Capacity Enhancement Project (AICCEP), a joint project of JICA and the Department of Trade and Industry.

Growth and development of various industries in the region will mean more investments, more employment, more businesses, more economic activities, and a brighter future for each province in the ARMM.

Inooka urged the ARMM cluster teams to find ways to make their projects "sustainable" so that each industry can continue growing in their respective provinces even after the end of the AICCEP project. (Philpress News)



ABACA CLUSTER team members huddle for a short meeting led by DTI senior trade industry specialist Mautante Marohombser (right) discussing ways to revise their plans and activate their projects and activities in Lanao del Sur.

SIDELIGHTS

Rubber cluster impressed by Makilala plantations

BASILAN --- Benchmarking visits to three rubber producing centers in Mindanao are expected to change the way rubber growers do things at their rubber plantations here in Basilan island.

One of the strongest impressions left on members of the rubber cluster team after their benchmarking trips, was their short visit to the sprawling rubber plantation of Platinum Rubber Development, Inc in Makilala, North Cotabato province.

"I was so impressed with the way they grow rubber trees at Platinum, I'm going to change the way I do things at our rubber farm," says Doming Narsico, vice-chairman of

the ARMM rubber industry cluster after recalling his tour of the rubber plantation of Platinum.

Narsico said the rubber plantation at Platinum has become so popular among rubber industries in Asian countries that it gets a regular stream of visitors, all Asian rubber growers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, etc who want to learn from the best agriculture practices of the commercial rubber company.

One advice for planting rubber that Narsico got from Platinum was to "plant it right and the rubber tree will grow up to 30 years" producing regular

quantities of quality rubber latex for the rubber grower to harvest over and over for many years.

Besides Makilala, the rubber cluster team also visited rubber farms in Kidapawan and the "Bagsakan Center" in the town of Titay, Zamboanga Sibugay where raw rubber cuplumps were being delivered and sold to waiting buyers and traders.

"For all of us with the rubber cluster team, the benchmarking trips were very productive and all the things we learned will remain with us and change the way we work at our rubber farms," says Narsico. (Philpress News)

Palm oil cluster awed by Agumil operations

BROOKE'S POINT, - Visibly impressed by the highly efficient operations of Agumil Philippines, palm oil company operating here at Brooke's Point, Palawan, the ARMM palm oil cluster team has begun adopting many of the things they learned from their recent benchmarking visit by sharing their experiences with the growers and farmers in Maguindanao province.

"It was a very productive benchmarking trip for all of us in the palm oil cluster--we learned a lot from Agumil's operations," says Khalikuzaman Baraguir, cluster co-chair and provincial director of the ARMM Department of Trade and Industry.

The palm oil company, according to Baraguir, is 75% owned by Filipino shareholders, while the other 25% ownership is controlled by Malaysian

investors. Agumil has a sister company, the Palawan Palm and Vegetable Oil Mills Inc and has a 7,000 hectares plantation all planted to oil palms.

Running its own big nursery and multi-million oil mill processing plant, Agumil have grower contract agreements with both individual farmers and farmers' cooperatives, similar to the grower contracts of banana companies with farmers and growers of giant Cavendish bananas in Mindanao.

When hauling and transporting fresh fruit bunches from the oil palm plantation areas, the company uses "crawler transports" to harvest and haul the bunches through a cable system that reaches up to the road where the hauler trucks carry the fresh fruits to the oil mill. (Philpress News)

Tuna export value down despite higher shipments

GENERAL SANTOS CITY - The value of Philippine tuna exports in 2014 went down by 30 percent despite an increase in shipped volume, according to a report prepared for the 11th Regular Session of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission (WCPFC) scientific committee in Pohnpei, Micronesia.

According to data submitted by the Philippine delegation, tuna shipments amounted to US\$459.83 million, down from US\$664.50 million in 2013. The bulk of export revenues came from canned tuna, which reached 58,660 metric tons (MT). Fresh, chilled and frozen tuna products came

turn to page 7

Product branding crucial to attract more customers

CEBU CITY --- Branding for any product or service is very important trying to reach a huge market, according to regional director Asteria Caberte of the Department of Trade and Industry in Region 7.

In a recent proposal submitted to the DTI head office, Caberte stressed the importance of developing a brand name and image for products made by micro-small and medium enterprises trying to penetrate the local market.

"As a new product, you need to do something to make your product stand out from your competition. This brand strategy will set your product apart as a unique product in the minds of customers trying to make up their minds which product to buy," Caberte said.

Caberte said the regional DTI office was set-

turn to page 7



COFFEE CLUSTER co-chairman Harrison Haron, DTI provincial director (left) listens intently to a presentation made by his cluster team during a recent JICA monitoring meeting in Davao. The team recently winded up a successful benchmarking visit to Cavite coffee farms.

Coffee cluster wants to visit Surigao and Davao

JOLO, SULU -- After a productive benchmarking visit to successful coffee farms and coffee research center in Cavite, the ARMM coffee industry cluster are also mulling plans of visiting Surigao, Davao and Bukidnon.

"There are many things we need to learn from coffee farmers and growers in Surigao that prompted Nestle to set up a buying station over there," says coffee cluster chair Abdusali Ahalul.

In a recent meeting with consultants of Japan International Cooperation Agency, the coffee cluster presented their plan for another benchmarking visit to the coffee plantations of Surigao province.

The Sulu-based coffee industry cluster team is convinced that there may be many things Sulu coffee farmers can learn from Surigao coffee farmers, growers and farm managers to make their area attractive to a global brand like Nestle.

Co-chair Harrison Haron, provincial director of the Department of Trade and Industry here in Jolo said these new benchmarking trips can bring new learnings for the coffee cluster team especial-

ly in effective ways to manage a productive coffee farm and how farm cooperatives are run effectively by farmers themselves.

On their way to Surigao for benchmarking, the coffee cluster team is also thinking of passing thru Davao City, Tagum City and Bukidnon to see how coffee is grown, harvested and packaged in these places.

"In Bukidnon, we like to see how they grow good quality Robusta coffee successfully, while in Davao we like to see how they process quality ground coffee, package them and develop a unique coffee brand that attracts consumers in the market," Haron said.

JICA senior adviser Tet-suo Inooka urged the coffee cluster team to develop and "promote the brand of coffee in the ARMM region" before anything else.

Inooka also asked them to review their new benchmarking plans and find out whether or not the activity is the "most important" one compared to other activities like the up-coming Farmers' Field School for coffee farmers or the coffee nursery in the island province. (Philpress News)

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JICA PROJECTS

JICA experts to help reduce fruit damage

CALINAN, DAVAO -- Japanese packaging experts are looking for ways to cut down the bruises and damage to fresh mangosteen fruit during handling and transport from the farm to the market.

Two large mangosteen plantations in Calinan and Toril were visited recently by Takasuke Ishitani, president of Japan Food Packaging Association and Toshhide Inada, technical advisor of Japan Packaging Institute, a member of World Packaging Organization.

In this recent visit to Davao fruit plantations set up by Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the problems of protecting the mangosteen fresh fruit from damage were the focus of the visits and inspection made by the two Japanese packaging experts.

Accompanied by JICA senior adviser Tetsuo Inooka, the two experts looked closely at how the mangosteen fruit ripens, how it is

harvested, how it is handled and how it is transported to the local market here in Davao.

"We need to protect the mangosteen fruit from damage during harvest, after harvest, during handling, storing and transport. To attract consumers in the market, one solution is good packaging that protects the fresh fruit from damage," says Inooka.

The JICA consultant has been working closely with top DOST technical staff the past several months on the processing and packaging of fresh fruits, specially durian and mangosteen for both the domestic market and Japan export market.

A recent meeting at the DOST on the packaging of mangosteen fresh fruit, drew two growers of the largest mangosteen plantations in Davao—

Dennis Villegas and Candilario Miculob.

Miculob, who also owns one of Davao's biggest durian plantations in Calinan was one of the recent recipients of JICA's assistance to the durian industry cluster on the processing and export of chilled and frozen durian to Asian markets including Japan. (Philpress News)



DURIAN EXPORTER Candilario Miculob (left) breaks open a durian fruit for taste-testing by Japanese packaging experts and JICA senior adviser Tetsuo Inooka (right) at the sprawling 15-hectare durian plantation owned by Miculob, now exporting chilled and frozen durian to Japan with the help of JICA.

ARMM first...

what we are paying now," said lawyer Samuel R. Matunog, ICT Davao President.

ICT-Davao and the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) signed recently a memorandum of agreement that paves the way for the P2.7-million funding for the ICT Cluster Meeting.

"ICT is one of the sectors for cooperation among the BIMP-EAGA member economies and is a key player for development and integration in the re-

gion," Matunog said.

NTC Region 9 Director Edgardo R. Celorico said the cable system will eventually be expanded to other parts of Mindanao.

The BIMP-EAGA Rink is a 5,092-kilometer cable system that will run through Sabah in Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Mindanao in the Philippines, Kalimantan in Indonesia, and link to other ASEAN countries as well as Guam and the United States mainland.

The cables will start in Brunei and Sabah, then connected to Kota Kinaba-

lu and Tawau, which is near the Philippines. The lines that will link Brunei and Malaysia are terrestrial while that in Parang, Maguindanao will use submarine cables.

"The project will establish a more reliable Internet connectivity in Mindanao, which is being positioned as a strategic location for BPO (business process outsourcing) companies," Romeo M. Montenegro, director of investment promotions and public affairs of the Mindanao Development Authority, said earlier. (Lovely Carillo / PNA)

ARMM pushes..

are the Agumil Oil Mill in Butuan, Caraga region and the Univanich Oil Mill in Isulan, Sultan Kudarat province.

Boosting the plans of the ARMM palm oil cluster team, was the offer of Univanich to help the team in putting up a nursery as well as a training program for farmers in managing their farms to produce high quality oil palms, according to Fernando de Dios, senior trade and industry specialist of ARMM Department of Trade and Industry regional office. (Philpress News)

clusters.

Inooka urged the cluster teams to discuss about some follow-thru activities to set into motion by the end of December 2015 to sustain the clusters' activities, encouraging them to "promote more participation of key stakeholders" of their industry clusters in every activity or project.

"We just want to make sure that all planned activities under the JICA fund will be completed by the end of December this year," Inooka said. (Philpress News)

JICA adviser...

itoring and reviewing their plans and activities to see if they are on schedule.

"If the level of your performance is somewhat incomplete, I urge you to discuss among yourselves whether or not the activity still need to be continued.. If this activity need to be continued for better performance, you discuss about a possible follow-thru activity. If the activity or project does not need to be continued, you may discuss among yourselves the possibility of re-allocating the un-used funds for activities with higher priority," Inooka told the industry



JAPANESE PACKAGING experts led by JICA senior adviser Tetsuo Inooka (second from left) inspect a fruit-bearing macapuno tree in upper Calinan in Davao. Takasuke Ishitani, president of Japan Food Packaging Assn. (second from right) and Toshhide Inada of Japan Packaging Institute (left) help design the packaging and packing of fresh macapuno for export to Japan.

Durian exporter boosts fruit exports to Japan

DAVAO CITY --- A small Davao-based exporter of fresh, exotic tropical fruits has been getting more export orders for his fresh, chilled and frozen durian as well as other tropical fruits like mango slices, papaya slices and pineapple chunks to Japan.

Candilario "Larry" Miculob, proprietor and manager of D'Farmers' Market Enterprise said his exports of these processed fruits are gradually picking up in Japan as more and more Japanese consumers are discovering that these exotic tropical fruits are now available in vacuum-sealed, ready-to-eat plastic packages.

"I've learned a lot from the advice of pack-

aging experts from Japan and DOST who provided technical advice on how to harvest, handle and package our durian for export," Miculob said.

Packaging technicians from the Department of Science and Technology backed up by Japanese packaging experts, supported by Japan International Cooperation Agency had been working closely with several durian growers and farmers in Davao since last year in processing and packaging durian for export.

Situated in a mountain village of Kawayani on the slopes of 8000-foot Mount Talomo, nearly 40 kilometers southeast from the city proper, the 15- hect-

are durian plantation with hundreds of fruit-bearing durian trees started in 1992 when the family started planting durian seedlings on the mountain's volcanic soil, some 500 feet above sea level.

"I think our efforts as durian farmers, after all these years are paying off. Export demand for our packaged fresh and frozen durian is going up," Miculob said.

An average of two 40-footer refrigerated container vans filled with processed fresh fruit from Davao are shipped to Japan direct from the fruit processing plant of D'Farmers' Market right inside its durian plantation in upper Calinan. (Philpress News)

New echnology...

coconut cluster team reported the following things they learned direct from the center: 1. Technology in coconut fiber processing; 2. Coco-based furniture and handicrafts from coconut trunks, leaves and husks; 3. Ethanol from coconut biomass; 4. Production of ethanol from coconut sap; 5. Plant genetics resources conservation and utilization; 6. Nursery management and establishment.

Baraquir said the coconut cluster team were also treated to actual field demonstrations of PCA's decorticating machine which turn coconut husks into coco peat and coco coir (fiber), twinning machines that turn coco fiber into coco twines, geotextile machine that turn coco twines into geonets, carpets and door mats.

Film showing of various coconut processes were followed by actual tours and field demonstrations of 1) virgin coconut oil processing, 2) coconut sugar processing, 3) macapuno tissue culture, and 4) coconut hybridization, according to Baraquir. (Philpress News)

PHILIPPINE CLUSTER BULLETIN

The Philippine Cluster Bulletin is the monthly publication of the ARMM Industry Cluster Capacity Enhancement Project (AICCEP) a joint project of Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Department of Trade and Industry of the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. (DTI-ARMM).

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DISCLAIMER

Editorial responsibility for every issue of the Philippine Cluster Bulletin lies solely on the Editor in Chief. Although every effort is made in validating and proofreading this issue under the time pressure of press deadline, we still anticipate some avoidable but unintentional errors, omissions and factual oversights. Being the sole responsibility of the chief editor, it is understood that NO member of the AICCEP project teams from either DTI or JICA is liable for any errors, omissions and oversights in every issue of the Philippine Cluster Bulletin.

MONITOR

Halal congress...

Mangkabung said the event will allow stakeholders to discuss the latest updates on halal industry development in the region.

"The ARMM aims to be the center hub of the halal industry, not only in the Muslim Mindanao but the entire country," she said.

ARMM Governor Mujiv Hataman assured his full support for the conduct of the activity and the region's halal industry. The development of the region's halal industry is among the top economic agendas of the present ARMM admin-

Farmers' coops...

Agumil, according to Baraquir, is offering grower service contract agreements to farm cooperatives with at least a minimum of ten farmers growing oil palms, extending technical and management assistance and buying their quality output at guaranteed prices.

Local government units in the province, specifically governors and mayors, are expected to help palm oil farmers' cooperatives by passing local ordinances to protect the interests of farmers and

ARMM cluster...

for more than 400 abaca farmers here in Marawi to inform them of the various projects and activities being planned for them in the abaca industry.

In the recent Davao meeting, ARMM Asst. Trade Secretary Abubacar Datumanong urged the cluster team to set into motion some of their projects soon as possible after revising their plans and budgets so they can run them simultaneously after the JICA funds are released to the cluster. (Philpress News)

Construction on...

In Basilan, road concreting has started for the Php38.8 million Tipo-Tipo-Sangkuyut road, the Php27.1 million Sangkuyut-Bohe Suyat road, the Php11.6 million Materling-Tong Bato road, and Php58.2 million Amaloy-Matata-Bucalao road, all in the town of Ungkaya Pukan.

Hataman assured the people of Basilan that road concreting will continue despite threats from extremist Abu Sayyaf Group which repeatedly attempted, but failed, to disrupt government projects in the island province. (PNA)

Growing world...

ers," says Alcantara. For coconut farmers who prefer to sell their coco coir as raw fiber in bundles, without turning them to processed coco products, the coco coir cluster is eyeing a trade fair in China on August 2016 where Chinese buyers are looking for raw coco fiber to buy from the Philippines. (Philpress News)

istration.

Apart from enforcing policies encouraging investment in and the development of halal ventures, the ARMM has put up a Regional Standards and Halal Testing Laboratory located at the DOST-ARMM regional office in Cotabato City.

The testing lab is manned by highly-competent Muslim chemists, who undergone rigid trainings on halal laboratory procedures. It aspires to be the center of credible halal certification in the country. (PNA)

growers in the industry.

ARMM local officials, according to Baraquir, are supporting the establishment of a palm oil mill in Maguindanao that will buy and get its supply of raw oil palm bunches from the various farmers' coops in the province.

One area being cited by the industry cluster team as an ideal site for an oil mill is the coastal town of Parang whose port area is being developed into an economic and industrial zone that will soon attract foreign investors eyeing to put up an oil mill for the palm oil industry. (Phil-

DA grants...

press News) es, as well as R&D partners such as state universities and colleges, international organizations, and the private sector.

Tong Abas, manager of the DAF-ARMM Integrated Agricultural Research Center, said his office will pursue development of the marang-flavored ice cream and marang jam.

"Marang is abundant in ARMM and if the product will be highly favored by the public, then this will help boost the economy in the region," Abas added.

DAF-ARMM Secretary Makmod Mending Jr. affirmed that the regional government will support the newly introduced ice cream flavors. The DA central office, however, advised ARMM exhibitors to submit business plans for their products.

Product branding...

ting up a "travel retail program" to take advantage of the fast-growing market in the Visayas, stressing the need to upgrade the "visual merchandising" and improving the "market readiness" of various products under the Wearables, Homestyle and Food Process Sector industries that will support the tourism industry.

Designers for the crafts and food sectors, according to Caberte, will be tapped for the project and will be expected to use new approaches and new design technology to improve the product image of local products churned out by small backyard manufacturers and skilled craftsmen turning out various souvenir products for visitors and tourists in the region. (Philpress News)

MSU seaweed...

Inooka of Japan International Cooperation Agency urged the seaweed cluster team to propose and submit "additional projects" for funding. "This time, we want you to also focus on processing of seaweeds into different products and distribution of these products in domestic markets as well as export markets," Inooka told the seaweed cluster team. (Philpress News)

Cluster to put...

director Khalikuzaman Baraguir who acts as co-chair for the industry cluster.

These training programs for palm oil farmers and growers in Maguindanao province are expected to take place in the coming months before the year ends. (Philpress News)

Abaca nursery...

into an association and earn from the income generated by the sale of abaca seedlings from these nurseries-- this is one of the best way to sustain the life of our industry cluster team," Alug said. (Philpress News)

Palm oil...

harvest properly and handle the fresh fruit bunches during the harvest, according to De Dios.

After the training seminars, the palm oil industry team is expected to prepare the ground work for a bigger project-- the setting up of oil palm nurseries in Maguindanao province to supply high quality seedlings needed by the increasing numbers of palm oil growers and farmers in Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao. (Philpress News)

Rubber farmers...

Lamitan.

To boost their skills in growing and harvesting high quality rubber, more than 200 rubber growers and farmers also attended a special forum on "Rubber Quality Standards" conducted recently by quality experts from the Bureau of Standards.

After the training for the rubber growers, some 40,000 quality rubber seedlings were distributed to the participants of the training seminars by the local government unit, according to Narsico.

Also scheduled after these series of basic training seminars, are two more important training schedules for rubber growers which include Rubber Tapping Techniques and Quality Management System set to take place on September and October this year. (Philpress News)

Ph garments...

"This means more business, more exports, more production and more labor generation for the Philippines," Young said.

Young identified Germany and France as the biggest buyers of Philippine handicrafts and other hard goods, while the United Kingdom favored children's dresses that were made in the country. Other examples of hard goods are housewares and accents, furniture, footwear, and accessories.

"These markets are more attractive to handcrafted skills of the Filipinos rather than those in other countries. The artistry in the Philippines is global in standards. We are more competitive than the other guys in the Asean region as we apply more handcraft work in our products," Young said.

Based on earlier projections by the Department of Trade and Industry, products that likely post

Fiesta booths...

nese will also learn from our unique culture and our ways of life," Shigemizu said.

According to Shigemizu, the community of Filipinos in Japan will set up various activities and decorate the venue at Yoyogi Park in Tokyo to make it look like a typical Philippine "barrio fiesta" complete with colorful bantings and streamers, with every Filipino participant wearing their native dress--men in barong tagalog shirt and women in native saya costume.

"We want to show the

Tuna export...

next with export volume totaling 28,808 MT. The country also exported 1,460 MT of dried and smoked tuna products.

Overall export volume went up to 88,928 MT, aided by a 98 percent increase in the volume of canned tuna, which topped 58,660 MT in 2014 - up from just 29,660 MT in 2013.

While the volume of tuna exports last year increased, it still is way below the 2010 volume of 110,489 MT. Major export destinations include the U.S., Japan and United Kingdom.

The rise in export volume coincided with the increased in tuna landings last year totaling 384,942 metric tons from both commercial and municipal fishing operations. General Santos City continues to account for the bulk of the country's total tuna landings.

In 2014, the Philippine Fisheries Development Authority office in General Santos City reported a total of 193,867.55 MT in fish landings - about 90 percent for tuna and tuna-like species.

the highest increases given the country's inclusion in the GSP+ scheme included textiles and garments (79.7 million euros), footwear, headwear, umbrellas (28.5 million euros).

Young added that improvements in the country's rankings in global competitiveness and the Philippines' hosting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) Summit and related meetings this year were seen further boosting exports of the garments and hard goods sectors.

"This will be noticed by foreign buyers, it is one factor in attracting businesses in the Philippines. The FOBAP is looking forward to more buyers coming to the country to look for merchandise for export to their own countries. Buyers will get excited and those who are not yet buying from the Philippines will get interested to learn about more Philippine products" Young said. (www.inquirer.net/PDI)

Japanese the colorful life of Filipinos during festivals like this, the lively music using native instruments, all the fun and culture they'll find in a typical fiesta. We want to show them why it's fun to be in the Philippines, why it's the ultimate destination for tourists," Shigemizu said.

Behind this coming Philippine festival, are the full support of the Philippine Embassy and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Japan. Last year's Philippine Festival held at the Ueno Park in Yokohama attracted more than 150,000 visitors, according to Shigemizu. (Philpress News)

The bulk of these landings, at 92,387.36 MT, however comprise frozen tuna of which 65,493.15 MT are imported from Papua New Guinea, Taiwan, Japan, Marshall Islands and Korea.

General Santos city is home to six of the country's tuna canneries. The two others are located in Zamboanga City. (Bloomberg News)

BPO industry...

BPO revenues increased by 19 percent from \$15.5 billion in 2013 to \$18.4 billion last year, representing 6 percent of the Philippine economy.

"All sectors are growing," Reyes said, adding that all segments - global in-house centers, health-care, mobile applications development, gaming and call centers - are expanding. For 2015, revenues are forecast to increase to \$21.3 billion, as Reyes expects growth from both the voice and non-voice segments.

"Healthcare is becoming big. It is the fastest growing now in terms of revenues and employees," he said.

To address challenges in sustaining its talent pool,

Solar power...

which cannot be avoided at all times because of the high domestic demand for milkfish, said Rosario.

BFAR-NIFTDC set up two locations of the solar-powered aeration system where they will monitor the project - one is inland or fishponds located inside the NIFTDC compound in Dagupan City; and the other, a floating setup for fish cages located in Baquioen Bay in Sual, Pangasinan.

JICA provided the funds and the solar panels and all its parts including the aerator that produces the smallest micro bubbles, which is the best for this system.

Rosario said this system is, for now, the best solution for recurring problem on threats of fish kill particularly the neap tide where the oxygen level of water goes down. (SUN STAR DAGUPAN)

Lake Lanao...

ture subsidy.

This project is intended to improve the lives of the people in Lanao de Sur province, according to the development agenda of the present ARMM administration," Loong said.

Construction of several infrastructure projects of the ARMM government has been on going, Loong said. He inspected the PHP10 million Pugaan Bridge in Ditsaan Raman.

Pugaan bridge forms part of the circumferential road that will connect municipalities surrounding the lake. Loong and other local officials also inspected the progress of rehabilitation work of PHP12 million Raman Bridge.

This year alone, the ARMM regional government headed by Gov. Mujiv Hataman has earmarked about PHP1.4 billion for various infrastructure projects. (PNA)

Nestle pushes...

and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources whose target for planting coffee as part of the nationwide "greening program" from 2012 to 2016 covers around 90,457 hectares. (Philpress News)

IBPAP is pursuing the Service Management Program (SMP), a 21-unit specialized course designed to provide students the skill sets needed to work in the industry. The program is being offered in 17 universities across the country.

IBPAP also is adding three or four cities to its list of next wave cities by the middle of the year. To date, the next-wave cities include Baguio, Davao, Dumaguete, Iloilo, Lipa, Metro Bulacan, Metro Cavite, Metro Laguna, Metro Naga and Metro Rizal. (Aksyon TV 5 Business)

AICCEP PROJECT MAP

Industry Cluster Project Map



Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) Industry Cluster Capacity Enhancement Project

