

POWER CLUB

A MERALCO PUBLICATION | APRIL 2013

AMITABHA
BASU

KEVIN TAN

THE LUMINARIES

MERALCO'S PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS

INDO PHIL TEXTILE MILLS & MEGAWORLD CORPORATION

PLUS

MERALCO PEAK/OFF-PEAK (POP) RATES EXPLAINED
PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC OUTLOOK FROM ADB'S NORIO USUI
ENRICHING LIVES WITH THE ONE MERALCO FOUNDATION



among the different units in Meralco, working for the ultimate aim of serving our customers even better.

In this issue of the Power Club, we recognize the accomplishments of our top customers, a select group of achievers whom we have dubbed the Meralco Luminaries. Now on its second year, through the Luminaries we honor the best of the best, so to speak, in terms of strategy and thought leadership, collaboration, execution and technology, who not only share our vision for a brighter Philippines but whom others can emulate as we take the road to a more energized future. We hope their stories will inspire others to greatness and pursue excellence for their own companies or businesses in 2013 and beyond.

Loyal Power Club readers may have noticed a change in the look of this news magazine—it's all in line with Meralco's continuing thrust to improve services across the board for all our customers. Providing our readers with timely information about developments in the power industry is an important aspect of full customer satisfaction.

Here's to another great year ahead!

Alfredo S. Panlilio

Senior Vice President and Head of Customer Retail Services and Corporate Communications



For many businesses, and particularly in the case of service-based industries, the secret of success boils down to two time-tested maxims: "The customer is king" and "The customer is always right." As the Philippines' largest distributor of electrical power, Meralco knows this well.

Going beyond the traditional definition of customer, we at Meralco recognize our clients as "Partners for Progress"—hence the creation of the Meralco Luminaries. Ten companies are on the shortlist for this year's Luminaries, with two companies closely edging out the competition: Megaworld for the commercial sector and Indo Phil Textile Mills representing industrial clients.

Everyone knows that Megaworld is a giant in the real estate industry, but what you may not know is that it is also the biggest BPO (Business Process Outsourcing) landlord in the country, cornering 30 percent of the market. Its McKinley Hill development where the winning Luminary entry, 8 Upper McKinley is located, is a beacon for employment in the BPO industry, a testament to Megaworld's excellent reading of its market's needs.

On the industrial side, Indo Phil has made great strides in energy efficiency in recent years, moving from being primarily a self-generator of power to a core customer of Meralco. By becoming more cost-effective, its cotton yarns, the raw materials for creating colorful fabrics, are kept competitively priced amidst stiff global competition.

The Meralco Luminaries is just one of our programs to showcase the importance of building strong relationships with our customers in the name of progress. Meralco is no longer just your electric provider, but your energy consultant of choice.

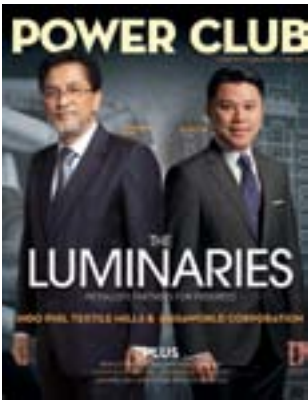
Engage our relationship managers and find out what we can do for you to enhance your operational efficiencies, and ultimately achieve your corporate bottom line. You too could be one of our Luminaries in 2014!

Victor S. Genuino

Vice President and Head, Corporate Business Group

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THE PERKS OF POP

With the MERALCO PEAK/OFF-PEAK PROGRAM, customers can expect lower electric bills thanks to cheaper power rates during specified times of the day

When the NPC Time-of-Use (TOU) and Ecozone Rates under the Customer Choice Program (CCP) expired last December, not a few companies worried about the possibility of rising electric bills in 2013. Now there's no need to worry.

OUT WITH THE OLD...

To take the place of the previous rate option, the Meralco Peak/Off Peak (POP) program—formerly known as Meralco Time-of-Use (MECO TOU)—was relaunched and received the green light from the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) in January 2013.

But before the ERC's affirmative decision was announced, several companies expressed concern over the expiration of the CCP. William De Lumley, Vice President-Aggregates Division of cement producing giant Lafarge/Batang Angono Aggregates Corporation, said that his company benefited from TOU by saving on its operating costs, allowing it "to be more competitive in the construction and mining industry."

In requesting for an alternative to the TOU, Paul Vincent Arcenas, Solid Cement Corporation Vice President for Strategic Planning, noted, "Any further increase in power costs may skew our allocations and

ultimately drive cement price higher; a scenario which we would like to avoid. In order to remain competitive, we will need your [Meralco's] support and assistance in mitigating potential power price increases."

When its customers speak, Meralco listens. In response to the clients' needs, the Meralco POP program was rolled out—offering better rates and much clearer customer benefits than ever before.

IN WITH THE NEW

Simply put, POP is an energy-pricing scheme which offers two rates, computed based on the time of day (and season) electricity is produced and the corresponding generation cost during that time.

Like many products and services, electricity costs are governed by the laws of supply and demand. We often see this principle at work with airlines or hotels who offer lower rates during the off-season. In the power industry, daytime hours (8 a.m. to 9 p.m., from Monday to Saturday; 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Sunday) are deemed "peak" hours due to high demand of electricity, which in turn is supplied by a large number of power plants, including those running on expensive fuels. During the "off-peak" hours

(9 p.m. to 8 a.m. Monday to Saturday; 12 a.m. to 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. to 12 a.m. on Sunday), only a few power plants running at lower operating costs are needed to supply the required electricity.

POP AT WORK

Contrary to public perception, Meralco has no control over the costs of power generation. Still, as a power distributor, it does its best to keep its customers' costs low: With the relaunched POP, off-peak rates are lower than the rates in the previous program. If customers previously paid P5.55/kWh under the old POP program, with the new POP rate they will only pay P5.51/kWh, an improved savings of P0.04/kWh assuming that 50% of their operations take place during the off-peak period. When a customer's consumption is in the megawatt or even gigawatt range, that can mean millions of pesos in savings. A wide array of businesses who can shift their operations to off-peak hours, from manufacturing plants to BPOs, can benefit greatly from this scheme.

Meralco's corporate customers with at least 500 kW should inquire how the POP program can be wielded as a strategic tool to achieve optimized efficiency and bottom line goals. Customers availing of the POP rates are expected to experience savings of up to 10 percent on the average versus regular Meralco rates in their monthly bills depending on their peak and off-peak consumption.

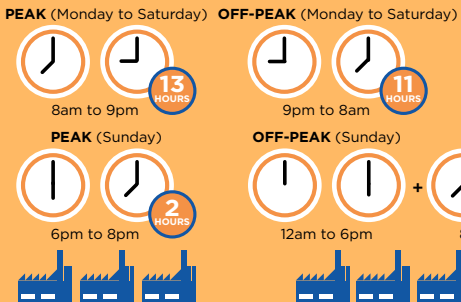
Interested customers may call their Meralco Corporate Partners relationship managers at 1622-2378.

REPOSITIONING TIME-OF-USE WITH LOWER FEES, BETTER RATES AND MORE TANGIBLE CUSTOMER BENEFITS

Meralco Time-Of-Use Rate program just got better! Rebranded as MERALCO PEAK/OFF-PEAK (MERALCO POP), the program now has even lower rates during off-peak hours , translating to bigger savings for businesses who can maximize operations during off-peak hours.

WHAT'S UP, MERALCO POP?

Meralco POP is an energy-pricing scheme which offers rates based on the time of day electricity is generated and on the cost of supplying electricity during that time. Rates are higher than average during peak period and significantly lower during off-peak periods.



It is available to all non-residential customers and corporate clients consuming at least 500 kW, and most beneficial to those operating or can shift a significant portion of their operations to off-peak hours.



ONCE YOU MERALCO POP, YOU CAN'T STOP!

YOU CAN NOW POP IN A SNAP!

LOWER OFF-PEAK RATES will give businesses more savings that they can use to make their operations bigger and better.

AND POP NON-STOP!

LOWER OFF-PEAK RATES can be enjoyed immediately by existing Time Of Use customers, with seamless integration with their new POP contracts, ensuring no adverse impact on their operations. The lower off-peak rates remain in effect for the duration of the contract period.

DRY TOU Php/kWh

Peak	P7.25	P7.48
Off-Peak	P3.86	P3.55
Difference	P3.39	P3.94

WET TOU Php/kWh

Peak	P6.95	P7.28
Off-Peak	P3.94	P3.55
Difference	P3.01	P3.73

Note: Rates include generation charge adjustment. New POP rates apply effective Feb 1, 2013

Other details of the program such as additional monthly charges, application process, contract period and pre-termination fee remain the same.

Since Meralco Peak/Off-Peak is only a rebranding & repositioning of Meralco TOU, existing TOU customers are automatically subscribed to POP and need not re-apply for a new contract.



KEY GROWTH AREAS GET A BOOST WITH IMPROVED POWER QUALITY AND RELIABILITY

Customers in major growth areas can now enjoy the supply of quality, adequate, and reliable power, thanks to a slew of recently completed power projects that significantly improved Meralco's existing distribution system.

At the Malibay Substation in Pasay City, a new Takaoka transformer has replaced the 52-year-old GE power transformer bank No. 2. Equipped with an on-load tap changer (OLTC) capable of keeping voltage within the rated level without needing to temporarily shut down the transformer bank, the new Takaoka transformer ensures fewer power service interruptions to Meralco customers.

This Takaoka unit works in tandem with another recently replaced transformer at the Kamagong substation in Makati, reinforcing power quality and reliability in the Makati area, Pasay, and portions of Taguig. Among the major customers getting a lift are DMCI Project Developers, Alphaland Corporation, Super Shopping Market, Philippine Air Force, Philippine Navy Finance Center, and several commercial establishments along Chino Roces Avenue in Makati.

Photography by Dakila Angeles and Jun Pinzon



Meanwhile, the Zapote-Legazpi-Kamagong 115kV sub-transmission line was also completed and energized to ease the overloading and critical loading of the existing Zapote-CBP1A 115kV line and Sucat-Sunvalley 115kV line in the event of an outage.

These upgrades should also provide sufficient line capacity upon the reconfiguration in 2013 of the 115kV sub-transmission system from two to three sectors. The lines were constructed with a combination of underground and overhead infrastructure, which led to a substantially stronger sub-transmission grid preventing widespread interruptions in high growth commercial areas of Makati, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Taguig, Muntinlupa, and Bacoor and Imus in Cavite.

Customers benefiting from the bolstered line capacity and power supply reliability are the bustling Central Business Park, Mall of Asia, Ayala Center, New Port City, Bonifacio Global City, Filinvest Corporate City, Madrigal Business Park, SM Molino, San Miguel Yamamura, and SM Bacoor, among others.

Rounding out the list of recently completed projects is the Cruz na Daan (CND)-San Miguel sub-transmission line in the Bulacan area. This project specifically provided a new 13-km. line along the Maharlika Highway, serving the San Miguel substation which addresses accessibility problems of the existing CND-Eagle Cement Corporation (ECC)-San Miguel 69 kV line during restoration works due to outages and maintenance. The new line follows a more direct route from the CND substation to the San Miguel substation. It avoids the patches of trees and vegetation along the route of the old line, responsible for occasionally tripping the lines in the past.

The addition of the new line allows operational switching flexibility for the San Miguel substation, leading to faster restoration time for customers in Candaba,



Pampanga and the towns of San Miguel and San Rafael in Bulacan, as power can be transmitted through the old CND-ECC-San Miguel line during contingencies.

With this auxiliary line setup, the reliability of power supply to Eagle Cement Corporation and Solid North Mineral Corp., Universal Robina Corporation and Megarock Milling Corporation, among others, has been greatly improved.

This project caps a series of improvements in the San Miguel substation area, which include the installation of a 69 kV bus-tie breaker and low side breaker for National Grid Corporation of the Philippines' (NGCP) 100 MVA Bank No. 2 (both energized in April 2012), combined Potential and Current transformers (PT/CTs) for metering (commissioned in September 2012), and Meralco's new control house for the 69 kV and 13.8 kV switchyard.

For more information about service improvements in your area, please contact the Meralco Corporate Partners at 1622-2378.



2013 PHILIPPINE ECONOMY FULL STEAM AHEAD!

Asian Development Bank Senior Economist **NORIO USUI** sees another strong year for the economy, but urges more reforms to achieve a more sustainable and inclusive growth.
by Ma. Stella F. Arnaldo

Norma Aspiras is in high spirits after speaking to her only grandchild Princess, now 8, who lives in the United Kingdom along with her mother, Norma’s daughter Donna, a registered nurse.

Now retired, Aspiras says she was also happy to hear that her daughter was going to be promoted again, which she hopes would also mean an increase in her monthly stipend. “Of course I miss them, but Donna is doing well over there, and my apo is getting the best education. It’s okay; she helps me out with my expenses,” Aspiras says, resigned to living away from her precious family.

More than a million Filipinos living and working overseas send some USD20 billion in remittances to their families here every year, a major factor that has helped boost the Philippine economy. These remittances, along with further increases in government spending, are the main reasons the economy will continue to remain strong in 2013, according to Norio Usui, senior economist of the Asian Development Bank’s Philippine country office.

Usui, who holds a master’s degree and Ph.D. from the University of Tokyo, also forecasts benign inflation for the year as the peso extends its gains, and barring any calamities, a good harvest of agriculture products. But he underscores the need for the government to undertake the needed structural reforms to ensure that the high growth trickles down to benefit the poor.

SURPRISING 4Q GROWTH
The government recently reported that the economy, as expressed in gross domestic product, expanded by 6.8 percent in the fourth quarter of 2012. This pushed up the average growth for the year to 6.6 percent, up from the 3.9 percent eked out in 2011, and beating the government’s own target of 5 to 6 percent for 2012. According to data from the National Statistical Coordination Board, household consumption rose by 6.1 percent in 2012, though this was lower than the 6.3-percent rise in 2011.

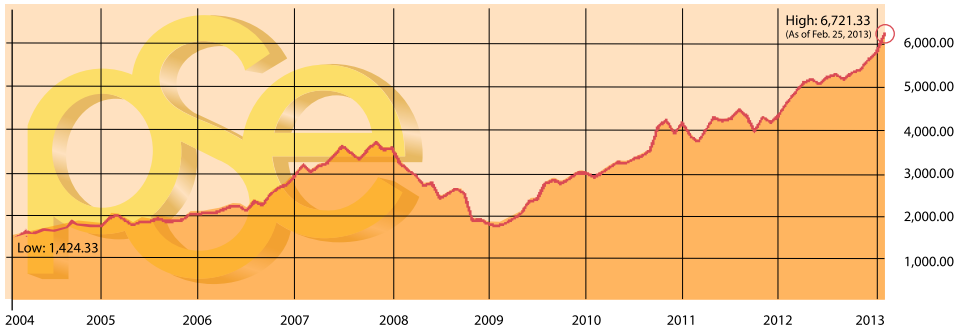
Other factors that drove the Philippines’ economic expansion in 2012, second only to China’s 7.9-percent growth, were the USD10 billion in services exports by the business

process outsourcing industry and increased spending by the government especially in the area of infrastructure. Government expenditures jumped by 12 percent, a substantial widening from the one percent recorded in 2011. (Still trying to crack down on corruption within the government, the Aquino administration had purposely tightened requirements for state projects, resulting in a slowdown in government spending in 2011.)

Like many economists, Usui expressed “surprise [at] another strong growth in the fourth of 2012, which is far beyond our forecast.” The ADB economist is certain the country would continue to post exceptional growth in 2013, “around 6 percent,” as consumers continue their spending habits and government further speeds up its expenditures. “The growth engine is definitely private consumption. You have a total of over USD30 billion (USD20 billion from OFW remittances and USD10 billion in services exports of BPOs) which can automatically support strong consumption by Filipinos.”

Infrastructure projects under the much-touted Private-Public Partnerships (PPP) program, are also expected to finally gather steam after a sputtering start, with only one project firmed up in 2011 after the program’s deafening launch in 2010. The Aquino administration recently announced the implementation of four big-ticket PPP projects this year, costing PHP80 billion.

With the favorable business sentiment from the private sector, investments



Since 2009, the Philippine Stock Exchange Index has been on an upward trajectory and continues to set record highs in 2013.



especially in private construction will also help buoy the economy this year.

STABLE INFLATION RATE
While growth will continue to be formidable, Usui said ADB’s forecast for 2013 will be “slightly lower than the 6.6-percent growth [the economy posted] in 2012. The main reasons are that there will be no more low-base effects, both in public spending and exports.” This means the remarkable growth figures posted in 2012 for these two economic components were due to the low numbers coming from the previous year. “Public spending and exports were quite low in 2011,” he stressed, at only one percent growth and 4.2-percent drop, respectively.

Despite the high growth rates posted in the past year, inflation will continue to be stable. Usui forecasts an average rise of about four percent for 2013, regardless of the national elections in May and the announcement of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas that it would be printing more money. (The BSP has said the high economic growth demanded more paper currencies.)

“There is no serious inflation risk for this country. Even if the economy continues to

Photography by **Toto Labrador** Grooming by **Fennie Tan** Styling by **Red Redrico and Fennie Tan** Art Direction by **Red Redrico**

show strength, prices can be relatively stable because of the strong currency and good performance of agriculture production,” he said. In 2012, the agriculture, forestry, and fishery sector expanded by 8.5 percent, though it was a slight decline from the 8.7 percent posted the previous year.

He also noted that there have been no dramatic increases in the global prices of oil and food, thus ensuring tame consumer prices this year. As of February 1, the price of Dubai crude was about USD110 per barrel, little changed from the average USD109.50 in 2012.

“HOT MONEY” POWERS BOURSE
No doubt, the peso will keep its appreciating trend in 2013 driven by OFW remittances and investments in the stock market.

“This is a structural problem of the Philippine economy. Because the economy depends on these OFWs and therefore consumption and growth, it is inevitable that this will put an upward pressure on the currency,” Usui pointed out.

The peso appreciated by 2.57 percent in 2012, averaging at PHP42.23 to the US dollar, from PHP43.31 the previous year. By the end of December 2012, the peso was at PHP41.19 to the greenback, from PHP43.62 at the end of January 2012.

Investment bank Goldman Sachs, in a recent briefing with business journalists, already predicted the peso gaining in value to PHP37.50 this year, due to the overall weakness in the US dollar and high economic growth rate in the ASEAN region.

For his part, Usui noted that “another factor [causing the peso to appreciate] is portfolio investments. There is more easy money in the world [as many countries have started easing their monetary policy to push their respective growths]. So investors now are looking for some place where they can put their money.

According to data from the BSP, foreign portfolio investments– so-called “hot money flows”—in 2012 reached a record high of USD18.5 billion, powering the local stock market to new highs.

STEPS TO REDUCE POVERTY
Economic gains aside, Usui said the Philippines still needs to undertake structural and policy reforms to make the high growth “inclusive,” and help eliminate poverty.

Usui points out that despite the country’s strong economic performance, the labor indicators are relatively poor. “The unemployment rate continues to be flat at 7 percent [as of October 2012]. The underemployment rate (those trying to find more work or an eight-hour job) is over 22 percent. So 29 percent—over one quarter of Filipinos—are still not fully utilized,” says Usui. “This reflects the lack of job opportunities in the domestic economy. Despite the growth of the economy, the poverty levels remain constant.”

Indeed, the NSCB data show that in

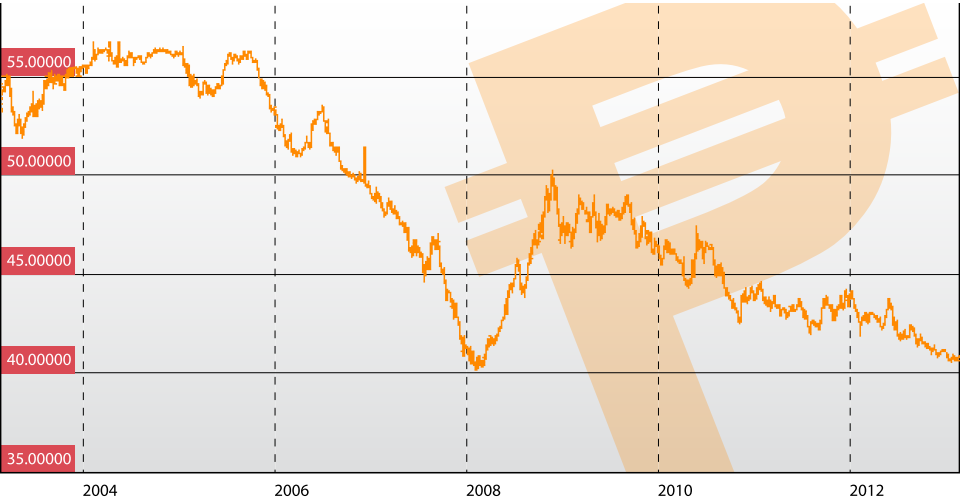
2003, 2006, and 2009, when the last poverty survey was taken, the poverty incidence hovered at 25-27 percent. This means that out of our 92 million population, some 25 million Filipinos were still poor (individuals earning below PHP17,000 a year, considered the poverty line, as of 2009). No wonder that many Filipinos continue to leave to find work abroad.

The biggest challenge to the Philippines, the ADB economist stressed, is “how to link the economic growth and development.” He prescribes a targeted investment program by the national government focusing on specific product winners, that are decidedly more high value, and taking the economy on an industrialized path.

For instance, instead of just producing semiconductors—the country’s primary export—Usui says the Philippines can just as easily manufacture “complete digital data processing machines.” Other possible products include watches, digital cameras and accessories, TV sets and broadcasting equipment, etc. (See Usui’s report, “Taking the Right Road to Inclusive Growth,” ADB, 2012.)

“The Philippines is one of the top countries with high electronics exports, much better than Vietnam, Thailand, and Indonesia. But once we compare with electronics exports from Malaysia, I can easily see that Malaysia established its competitiveness in the high-value sector of electronics. The Philippines still concentrates on the middle- and low-value segment of electronics....Try to target the high-value segments because your country has the competency to produce high-value electronics products here.”

Once the government is able to identify these product winners, it can then implement the needed reforms to make these industrial sectors more efficient, as well as promote policies to attract foreign direct investments into these areas, Usui says. According to BSP data, FDIs jumped 40 percent to USD1.1 billion from January to September. While remarkable, FDIs into the Philippines “is still minimal compared to other countries.” BSP and Reuters data reported higher FDIIs into



The strengthening peso also points to a stable and robust economy. Some analysts predict PHP37.50 to the dollar by this year.

Malaysia (USD5 billion), Indonesia (USD9 billion), Thailand (USD6 billion), and Vietnam (USD10 billion).

BPOS TO THE RESCUE?
Because of the Filipinos’ English proficiency, the BPO industry is one of the thriving sectors in the country. “But my question is, who can get a job there?” he asks. “In simple call centers, the minimum requirement is a college graduate. Can all Filipinos go to college? Most cannot. Who can provide a job for these kinds of moderately-skilled or unskilled workers? The services sector is good for the skilled Filipino worker, but we must also seriously think of how can we create jobs for the moderately skilled workers. To my mind, this [Philippine] growth model depends too much on the services sector which cannot dramatically lead to the reduction in poverty.”

Industry and manufacturing have the highest productivity compared to other economic sectors such as agriculture and services, and certainly, have the most impact on poverty reduction. Usui says “Many investors, in particular Japanese, have been reassessing the potential of the Philippines as their new production base in the regional production network. Chances are already open to the country. A key question is if the country wants to grab them or not.”

With a strong manufacturing base, as well as a flourishing services sector, “the Philippines will become a real tiger where the economy can easily grow 8 to 9 percent. This will lead to dramatic poverty reduction,” Usui declares. “This is the kind of Philippines I hope to see. Then many people can find a job, not in Abu Dhabi, but here in the Philippines.”

[Ed. Note: Following the completion of this article, Fitch Ratings gave the Philippines an investment-grade rating (BB+) on March 27, 2013. Financial analysts across the board welcomed the development, which is expected to lower the country’s borrowing costs, encourage additional foreign investment, and support the further appreciation of the peso.]

PARTNERS FOR PROGRESS

Most Outstanding Industrial and Commercial Corporations

Derived from the Latin word “luminare”, which means to shine, a luminary can be defined in several ways: An object, such as a celestial body, that gives light; a person who is an inspiration to others; a person who has achieved eminence in a specific field. All these are qualities that embody the 2013 Meralco Luminaries. On the following pages are Meralco’s most outstanding commercial and industrial corporate partners—those who possess the spirit of innovation, continually pursue excellence and increased energy efficiency, and remain committed to matters of corporate and social responsibility. Sharing Meralco’s goal for a more energized nation, the Luminaries’ laudable achievements light the way towards a brighter future.

CEMEX: EMPOWERED TO HELP IN NATION BUILDING

Utilizing the Time-of-Use program allows the cement manufacturer’s Philippine operations to remain efficient and cost-effective
By Ben F. Torres

Fifteen years after establishing its operations in the Philippines, CEMEX, the Mexico-based building solutions company, remains bullish on the nation’s prospects. According to Pedro Palomino, Country President of CEMEX Philippines, there is a compelling correlation between cement sales and a country’s prosperity. Given CEMEX’s strong performance in the past year and with projections remaining high in 2013, Palomino is certain more good days—for his company and the Philippines—lie ahead. “We remain optimistic that demand will continue to be robust this year. We see that there is sustained confidence in our investment climate, thus encouraging more projects. Additionally, the Philippine economy exhibits resilience against global challenges, and the domestic engines like the services sector remain dynamic while there is substantial improvement in manufacturing and construction industries,” says Palomino.

Despite this rosy outlook, CEMEX, the mother company of Solid Cement Corporation, isn’t resting on its laurels. It continues to improve its products, streamline

its operations, and effectively manage its operating costs. Since 2001, CEMEX has partnered with Meralco to address its power demands. “We count on Meralco to help us find ways on how we can address challenges in the power sector as it is clearly linked to the efficiency and being cost effective of our Philippine operations,” explains Palomino.

With the expiration of a previous power rates option scheme in December 2012, which the company had participated in since April 2008, CEMEX lauded Meralco’s efforts in coming up with the Meralco Peak-Off Peak (POP) program. By shifting to this scheme the company will be able to maintain the competitive pricing of its cement products.

Today CEMEX continues to rely on Meralco to foster growth in the construction sector through its supply of reliable and competitively priced power. So far, CEMEX has been the subject of three Meralco Power Quality (PQ) studies. Every quarter, Meralco’s PQ and system analysis teams, CEMEX engineers, and Meralco Rizal Sector’s maintenance team have coordination meetings to pinpoint and proactively address the company’s requirements. “Meralco has clearly become more customer-oriented,” observes Palomino. “They’re extremely receptive to our technical needs.”



Pedro Palomino
Country President,
Cemex Philippines

Photography by Jun Pinzon Grooming by Ariene Aldito Styling by Joel Ontong Art Direction by Red Redrico

NUTRIASIA: POWERED UP TO MEET GREATER DEMAND

With a smooth power up during NutriAsia’s transfer to its new manufacturing facility, production downtime was kept to a minimum.
By Ma. Stella F. Arnaldo

When an all-Filipino company manufacturing iconic brands like UFC, Datu Puti, Papa, Mang Tomas, Jufran, and Golden Fiesta needed to ramp up its production to meet growing consumer demand, it turned to another Filipino firm with an established track record of excellence and credibility.

Meralco was NutriAsia’s “reliable partner” when the food firm moved to its new manufacturing plant in Cabuyao, Laguna, last year, according to NutriAsia Chief Financial Officer Leo Cloma. The power distributor’s engineers closely coordinated with NutriAsia’s plant supervisors to properly synchronize the transfer—powering down the old and switching on the new plant—helping ensure that the food firm continued to churn out its products with no impediments. “The repercussions of having no products in the market for a period of time would be disastrous for business,” stressed Cloma. “Thanks to good planning and execution, this did not happen.” As NutriAsia’s energy consultant, Meralco was able to limit production downtime as the food giant was



able to tap the power firm’s secondary line during the transfer. As NutriAsia’s old plant was serviced by Meralco’s primary line, what normally would have taken the food firm a long period—approximately three months—to shift, then remove all the supplied electricity, took all but two weeks. Through the collaboration with Meralco, NutriAsia managed to keep production humming at 50 percent capacity to ensure their products’ availability in the market, avoid revenue loss while fast-tracking the move to the new location.

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PAG-ASA STEEL: PARTNER IN INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, POWERED FOR GROWTH

Savings from the Peak/Off-Peak program will support lower production cost.
By Julian Vorpai

If a country were likened to the human body, infrastructure would be its skeletal frame and electric power, its lifeblood.

The steel industry plays a crucial role in the development of a nation’s infrastructure. And, in the construction of infrastructure, steel bars provide the critically needed strength and ductility to concrete structures that eventually become schools, bridges, manufacturing centers, skyscrapers, shopping malls, private homes, and other vital structures, once completed.

For almost half a century, Pag-Asa Steel has been supplying these crucial “rebars” to local builders in its capacity as a manufacturer and a vital partner in nation-building and national development. Since 1964, the company’s renowned insistence on only high quality products and services has made the “Pag-Asa” name and brand the most trusted among users, one synonymous with consistency, dependability, and reliability.

Not content with past achievements, Pag-Asa continues to apply high standards to all of its operations, products, and services. And through the years, Meralco has served as an important service provider and ally. In 2010, Pag-Asa Steel started availing of Meralco’s Peak/Off-Peak (POP)

program then known as Meralco Time-of-Use. “This was in line with our continual quest for lowering cost of power in our manufacturing operations,” Pag-Asa Steel president Wellington Y. Tong admits. Over a 12-month period, Pag-Asa Steel generated an estimated power cost savings of at least PHP3.2 Million. And the company is hopeful that the much lower present POP rates will further reduce its cost of power.

“Innovating and improving are key drivers in our corporate credo,” Tong notes. The company is currently building a new plant that will eventually triple current capacity. Again, Meralco plays an important role in this endeavor. “To make a competitive product, we require reliable, competitive, and clean power from Meralco. Operationally speaking, poor power quality damages our automation and remote control systems and is the cause of many disruptions,” he adds. Here, Meralco is challenged to come up with the quality and cost of power that Pag-Asa demands.

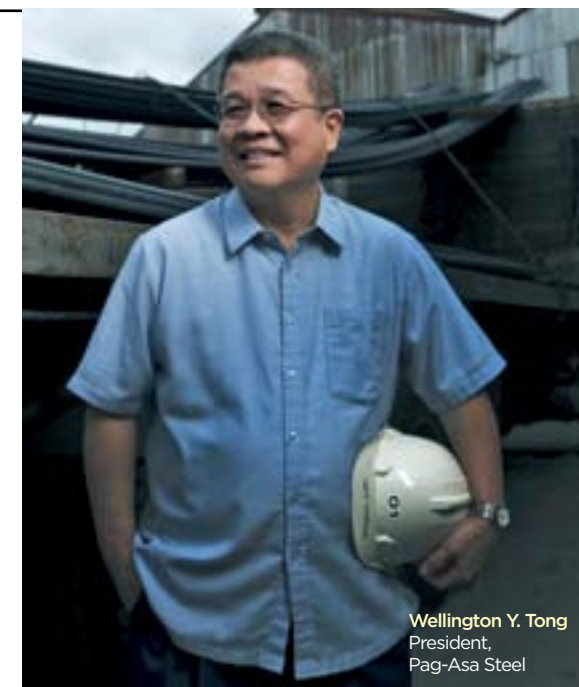
With the present strength in the construction sector, Pag-Asa Steel is well-placed to benefit as a major rebar manufacturer. “I believe that the demand for steel bars and roofing products will spearhead the country’s usage of steel,” Tong says. “A huge segment of our population still needs—and indeed dreams of owning—a durable dwelling for their families. In addition, we need to build basic infrastructure such as good roads, ports, bridges, airports, and the like in order for the economy to grow sustainably.” All of this will require the use of steel bars.

Meralco was able to provide NutriAsia continuous power of 500 kW, enough for the company to jumpstart and continue its output under the new plant for a seamless transition between the two locations.

And while the new facility requires additional contracted capacity of 200 kW over the previous facility because of its higher manufacturing output capabilities, NutriAsia still manages to save on power costs with its improved computerization and use of properly maintained equipment. Further energy savings are expected as the food company installs more efficient lighting systems.

With stepped-up yields boosted by Meralco’s generous uninterrupted power supply, NutriAsia is looking forward to a “high single digit” percent increase in sales for 2013. Cloma underscored that NutriAsia’s profit targets in the years to come will no doubt be achievable with the help of reliable partners such as Meralco.

“Cost effective, clean, and uninterrupted energy supply is a factor in the continuous development of companies such as NutriAsia. Our stringent quality systems require us to be efficient and precise. Disruptions in power supply are costly, including the waste that results from consuming energy that does not produce the needed products. Thanks to Meralco, we don’t need to worry about that.”



Wellington Y. Tong
President,
Pag-Asa Steel

In this prospective scenario, Meralco is an essential component to the equation. “We have looked at Meralco as a working partner since our founding,” Tong states, observing that the power distributor has been making overt efforts in improving its relationship with its clientele in order to bring about critical upgrades to their services. “Meralco has been doing a lot of consultation work with us and its other customers in an effort to understand our needs. This is a welcome development.”

THE ARANETA CENTER:
POWERING THE AWAKENING
OF A GIANT

The timely supply of additional power and technical expertise are key components in Araneta Center’s ongoing revitalization. By Jing Lejano

Although Araneta Center has always been acknowledged as the pioneer in retail entertainment, by the end of the last century, the entry of newer shopping complexes throughout the metropolis eventually took the luster from this go-to shopping destination. Then in 2004, the Araneta Group regained the spotlight with the launch of the Gateway Mall. A five-level shopping complex with over 200 specialty shops and countless dining destinations, the mall, according to Araneta Group President and CEO Jorge Araneta, “served as the main catalyst to the renaissance of the Araneta Center.”

A priority in this revitalization was the renovation and expansion of its flagship Ali Mall, the first mall in the Philippines, constructed in 1976. The group made the decision to keep the mall open during the refurbishment, so strategic management of its power supply was necessary: power disruptions were carefully planned and kept to a minimum to ensure the smooth flow of operations within Araneta Center.

FORT BONIFACIO
DEVELOPMENT CORP.:
POWERING THROUGH
THE MASTER PLAN

With the appropriate power infrastructure and related services, FBDC continues the transformation of the former military base to a premier mixed-use destination. By Jing Lejano

Bonifacio Global City is one of the most vibrant and dynamic destinations in the country today. Apart from all those buildings rising, there are restaurant and retail openings right and left, as well as art exhibits and sporting events almost every weekend. After what appeared to be a slow start, the former military base is well on its way into becoming the country’s premier residential, commercial, and business hub.

It all started with one masterfully crafted plan, says Manny Blas, head of commercial operations of Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation (FBDC). As he explains, the plan accounts for just about everything that is happening, and will happen, in Bonifacio Global City. Spaces have been identified according to their specific purpose, whether residential, office, or retail. Streets have been mapped to ensure optimum traffic flow. Utilities have been designed to bear the load of a fully developed Bonifacio Global City.

Take the case of power, for example. Blas reveals, “The main thing is that Meralco was part of the master plan from the beginning. It wasn’t, ‘We need it now. Let’s

Jorge Araneta
President and CEO,
Araneta Group



Consultations with Meralco showed that with the expanded and upgraded facilities Ali Mall would require an additional 1 megawatt of transformer capacity, not to mention an extensive revamp and rewiring of the mall’s electrical system. Meralco was able to address these concerns by installing another transformer bank to complement the six

already in place, and providing the technical know-how to properly and safely rehabilitate the mall’s existing wiring installations.

With the successful completion of Ali Mall’s renovation, the Araneta Group and Meralco are now looking forward to the next phase of redevelopment. Discussing his master plan, Araneta reveals the key components include a joint venture with Megaworld, Manhattan Garden City, an 18-tower residential development; the Gateway Tower, a 31-level office tower; South Parking Garage, a 1,500-unit eight-level state of the art parking facility; the ongoing renovation of Smart Araneta Coliseum; the construction of a performing arts theater; and the development of Novotel Hotel. Scheduled for completion next year, the Araneta Group counts Accor, a French hotel chain with over 4,000 hotels round the globe, as its partner for this venture.

In discussing the future, Araneta revisits the past, and the partnerships built that brought it to where it is at present. “The relationship of Meralco and the Araneta Center goes back a long time. From a cogon field where the coliseum was built in 1960 to the Araneta Center today, we have always been a major customer and likewise a contributor to Meralco’s growth... With the advent of open access, we consider MPower, Meralco’s retail energy provider, as a long-term partner for our future energy requirements.”

Photography by Dix Perez Grooming by Arlene Aldito Styling by Joel Ontong Art Direction by Red Redrico

Manny Blas
Head of Commercial Operations,
Fort Bonifacio Development Corp.



Photography by Cos Cosculiuela Grooming by Fennie Tan Styling by Joel Ontong Art Direction by Red Redrico

THE UNIVERSITY OF
THE PHILIPPINES:
POWERING EXCELLENCE

Consultation on electric utilization saves U.P. PHP6 million yearly By P. Honore

Established in 1908, the University of the Philippines is the country’s national university, with many of its faculty members, students, and alumni rising to prominence in various fields of endeavor, here and abroad.

Reasserting its position among the leading universities in the Asia-Pacific region, the university is increasing its commitment to modernize its facilities and services. Leading the charge is Alfredo E. Pascual, the 20th president of University of the Philippines, whose challenge includes finding ways to trim down the operating expenses of U.P. campuses without compromising on academic standards—addressing the costs of power requirements would be one of the most important steps. By counting on U.P.’s partnership with Meralco, the main campus in Diliman led by Chancellor Caesar Saloma was able to save up to PHP6 million a year—a significant amount which can now be used to fund operations of the new buildings on the campus.

Fittingly enough, given U.P.’s reputation as a center of research, part of the answer to reducing its power costs came from the results of a research grant.

Photography by Dix Perez Grooming by Fennie Tan Styling by Joel Ontong Art Direction by Red Redrico



Atty. Joey Lina
President,
Manila Hotel

THE MANILA HOTEL:
ALL POWERED UP FOR THE
NEXT HUNDRED YEARS

Reliable power slices power costs By Jing Lejano

Few hotels in Asia can brandish such a rich, historic lineage. It was once the command post of General Douglas MacArthur at the height of World War II and his home for six years. Through the years, countless luminaries have walked down its halls including King Juan Carlos and Queen Sofia of Spain, the former U.S. Presidents Bill Clinton, Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon B. Johnson, and John F. Kennedy, Ernest Hemingway, Marlon Brando, and John Wayne.

Last year, the “Grand Dame” celebrated its 100th anniversary, welcoming visitors to suites that have been luxuriously renovated and restaurants fully refurbished. But as the hotel marched on towards its next century, it was clear that its power supply had become grossly inadequate. Manila Hotel President Atty. Joey Lina put his faith in Meralco to solve the hotel’s growing power supply needs.

Previously, to complement its power requirements, the hotel had relied on a battery of generators. To come up with a

Among the findings of the study “Proposed Schemes for Cost Effective Utilization of Electricity of U.P. Diliman Buildings” was that at least 39 out of more than 100 buildings on campus were consuming less than 70 percent of U.P.’s contracted capacity with Meralco.

Seeing that the university is a public, non-secular, and non-profit institute of higher learning, and that its goals were aligned with that of the One Meralco Foundation, which counts education among its main thrusts, Meralco felt a moral obligation to support the university in its bid to reduce its operating costs while improving its standard of education. “We worked it out with Meralco—and we were very happy that Meralco had been very receptive, very supportive,” says Dr. Pascual. – “We were able to reach an agreement to review the demand charge. Because of this reduction, we now save up to PHP500,000 monthly from the affected buildings.”

But that’s not all. According to the university president, its partnership with Meralco stretches to several other projects, which include studies on the development of a battery-powered vehicle, financial sponsorship for competing in the design of fuel-efficient vehicles, and the powering of the university’s proposed Automated Guideway Transit System once it becomes operational.

As the country’s national university marches on into the future, the path ahead appears increasingly bright.

better and more practical solution, Atty. Lina explains, “We requested Meralco for an additional supply of 1 megawatt power, and it responded very quickly to our request.” Since Meralco started providing the hotel with more power last year, the establishment’s electricity supply has become stable, sufficient, and reliable.

The hotel also leverages on the engineering expertise of Meralco’s subsidiary, MServ, for transformer testing and load side power quality concerns. The switch from the generator arrangement to the Meralco supply line has brought significant savings of roughly PHP 694,000 a month for the hotel. With that, Lina says, “We are looking into the continued improvements here in the hotel.”

Fortunately, their efforts have not been all for naught. The Manila Hotel is the hotel of choice of three of the world’s top airlines according to the 2012 *Conde Nast Traveler* Readers’ Choice Award for Best Airlines. The hotel also made it to *Conde Nast Traveler’s* Readers’ Choice Awards for the Top 20 Hotels in Southeast Asia last year. Atty. Lina was understandably ecstatic over this, but quickly added, “But, of course, our vision is to make it to the Top Five in the world!”

With its facilities fully amped, its staff psyched up, and its power capacity all the way up, the Manila Hotel is more than ready for the next hundred years.



Dr. Alfredo E. Pascual
President,
University of the Philippines

INDO PHIL TEXTILE MILLS
2013 Meralco Luminary,
Industrial Category

“1,400 people are working here at Indo Phil and we have a social responsibility to them and their families, and also to the area around the plant. That is what we consider the most important factor of our business.”

Photography by **Dix Perez** Grooming by **Fennie Tan** Styling by **Joel Ontong** Art Direction by **Red Redrico**

THREAD OF LIFE

Indo Phil Textile Mills is the largest textile yarn manufacturer in the country. Its longstanding senior executive, **Amitabha Basu**, shares a few insights on how the partnership between Indo Phil and Meralco has been going steadily for the past five years.

By P. Honore

Just under an hour's drive from Metro Manila, Indo Phil is located in the municipality of Marilao, Bulacan. Once a sleepy agricultural town, it has transformed into a bustling industrial center. Since 1975, it has been home to Indo Phil Textile Mills, the country's acknowledged leader in the textile yarn industry.

A joint venture between the Indian conglomerate Aditya Birla Group and its Philippine partners, Indo Phil began operating its textile yarn manufacturing plant with 15,500 spindles and 500 employees. Today, it operates 91,000 spindles at three plants and a dye house, with approximately 1,400 permanent employees. It produces about 68 tons of quality yarn per day such as TC (Teteron Cotton), CVC (Chief Value Cotton), Rayon, and acrylic high bulk, and acrylic non-bulk dyed yarn, for both the local and export markets.

Making Indo Phil's continued success even more astounding is the milieu in which it operates. Once a thriving industry, many of the country's textile mills have shut down or downsized their operations, mainly due to high operating cost and competition from our Asian neighbors, including Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and China.

Amitabha Basu, who has been in the Philippines for 20 years, candidly reveals how their company has been able to thrive, in the midst of an industry-wide downturn: "In order to survive in a highly competitive environment, we had to find ways to reduce our operating costs. We had to produce the best quality product, at the lowest possible cost. That became our mantra for surviving." Basu went on to say, "Maintaining the quality of our product and a workable, cost-effective operation, these are the two most important parameters for running our business. But of course, you should also have the right people in the right places."

Working for the Aditya Birla group in India before his Philippine posting, Basu's area of expertise was in power plant management and engineering. At Indo Phil

he made full use of those skills, as he was put in charge of operating the company's own captive generating facility. "Since 1994, we had been operating our own captive power plant and catering to Indo Phil's 100 percent power requirement, but the rising crude oil prices forced us to almost stop this in 2008. At that point, we formed a strategic partnership with Meralco, where we are using power from them at times [off-peak hours] which best suit our requirements." Basu further explains, "Using the Time of Use became an advantage for us, because in the night time, the power cost is lower. We run the plant 24 hours a day, 350 days in a year, in three shifts. It became useful to have the Time of Use to get the best power rate possible." With the discontinuation of the Time of Use scheme in December 2012, Indophil is now availing of Meralco's Peak-Off Peak (POP) program and is looking forward to continual partnership with Meralco in a tough global competitive landscape.

Making judicious use of Meralco's rates program has proven beneficial in the long run. Adapting it within the company was also hassle-free. "It was easy to adjust, since our plant runs at full capacity all day, and therefore carries almost the same load. The Time of Use program was implemented without any problem," states Basu. It also helps that a representative from Meralco is available to handle the company's technical concerns at any time of day. "We do get very good service with Meralco. Whenever we need our relationship manager, we just give him a call and just like that, he is here. Or sometimes I go to their office. In the course of the last four or five years, we've had many discussions about our energy use, and Meralco is always willing to assist in any matter that pertains to our electric power."

Leaving the company's power requirements in Meralco's hands, Indo Phil is able to focus on improving other aspects of the company, and more importantly, in helping out in the community. In a study prepared for the University of the

Philippines by Dr. Josefino Torres, Deputy Administrator of the Department of Labor and Employment, Indo Phil was chosen as one of the few companies making "Socially Responsible Improvements in Working Conditions." Indo Phil was noted for its efforts in creating a healthy and safe environment for its workers, and in being committed to employees' training and development. Dr. Torres also emphasized the company's good practices which went beyond the workplace, improving not just the lives of the workers, but the society in which they live. A few of the awards and recognitions accorded to Indo Phil and its employees are the OHSAS-18001 certification for occupational health and safety, SA8000 for social accountability, the Philippine Quality Award, "Child-friendly Organization" citation by the ILO, Ramon Magsaysay award, and the Management Excellence award, and the first textile company in Philippines to receive ISO-9000 certification in 1993.

Through the years, Indo Phil has been a driving force behind the Mahaveer Philippines Foundation (MPFI), which aims to make qualitative difference to the lives of the physically impaired by providing artificial limbs to Filipino amputees, "especially the needy who can't afford it. So far we have distributed 8,500 of these," says Basu. Indo Phil bears much of the cost of production of the prosthetic legs, called the "Jaipur Foot," which are manufactured and distributed by MPFI.

Basu also reveals that the company made a donation to the Philippine National Red Cross after last year's typhoons. "We actively help when there are natural calamities and floods. If there is a need for us to reciprocate or give back, we do everything we can for the community, especially in Manila and Bulacan." Going beyond the borders of its immediate community, Indo Phil is partnering with Habitat for Humanity, Philippines, with the plans of building a low-cost housing project in Navotas.

Basu notes, "The Philippines is a very small operation in terms of the total revenue of the Aditya Birla Group. It may not seem large but we look at it in a different way in the sense that 1,400 people are working here and we have a social responsibility to them and their families, and also to the areas around the plant. That is what we consider the most important factor of our business."

With Indo Phil's admirable corporate values and goals, Meralco couldn't ask for a better Industrial Partner for Progress. 

MEGAWORLD CORPORATION
2013 Meralco Luminary,
Commercial Category

“Megaworld sees success in our communities when we see cohesiveness in our customers, residences, and offices. When we see the successful integration of all these, that’s the first sign of success for us.”

Photography by Dix Perez Grooming by Fennie Tan Styling by Joel Ontong Art Direction by Nat Clave

BOLD MOVES

No doubt about it, **Megaworld Corporation** has changed the Philippine property landscape. The firm continues to expand its empire of residential, commercial, retail, and office spaces, always with Meralco at its side—Partners for Progress paving the way for a brighter tomorrow.
By Jing Lejano

In the 1990s, the idea of building a commercial complex along E. Rodriguez Jr. Avenue would have struck even the most daring of developers as somewhat outlandish. After all, there was nothing around the Libis area except for a bunch of factories and warehouses alongside sleepy residential villages.

Megaworld Corporation didn’t quite see it that way.

As Kevin Tan, first vice president and head of Megaworld Commercial Division, explains, “It was unthinkable during the 1997 crisis that any building would go up around that area. But we studied the surroundings of these developments. We saw how the neighboring areas had been urbanizing and developing—and we were quick to see the potential.”

Today, Eastwood City is one of the country’s leading commercial and residential developments. More importantly, it is the home of Eastwood City Cyberpark, a business process outsourcing (BPO) office complex and IT center duly certified by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA).

Megaworld’s bold move in aggressively establishing Eastwood City as the place to be is the kind of forward-thinking strategy that has propelled this corporation into new heights in the property development industry. Apart from Eastwood City, Megaworld Corporation has also built similar prestigious projects such as Newport City and McKinley Hill. Covering 50 hectares, McKinley Hill in Taguig is Megaworld’s largest “township” development, boasting 400,000 sq. meters of office space across 17 buildings. It is the location for the firm’s winning Luminary entry, 8 Upper McKinley, which offers 8,500 sq. meters of office space.

Of its many milestones, its success in the BPO sector is where the property giant feels the greatest sense of accomplishment, reveals Tan. “We are proud of our achievements in the business process outsourcing industry. We were the first company ever to apply for PEZA accreditation. We are also currently the largest BPO landlord in the country. We have

470,000 square meters of BPO offices. One out of every three BPO employees works in a Megaworld development. This is an achievement that we are very, very proud of.”

More than just a center for IT parks and BPO-friendly buildings, Megaworld Corporation has taken the concept of development further by specializing in urban townships. These are self-contained communities where individuals can work, live, and play in a safe and convivial environment. Tan says, “It’s important to us that the employees who work in our communities are happy. They find job fulfillment. It is also important to us that we fulfill their needs by developing correct amenities and activities that will make them comfortable and happy.”

Maintaining excellent working relationships with its partners is also integral to the company. Meralco and Megaworld, for instance, enjoy a flourishing relationship. Tan says, “Meralco contributed to our success through the timely energization of our various developments. It is through this that we are able to turn over our facilities in time to our clients so that they may start their businesses as soon as possible.”

He adds, “We look at Meralco as a partner as we expand. As we grow together, we hope to build more energy-efficient buildings, hotels, offices, and commercial centers. And we can only do this by working hand in hand with Meralco.”

And because the efficient utilization of energy is essential in BPO-oriented buildings, Tan says, “Through our consultation with Meralco and our customer relationship manager, not only are our projects energized on time, our buildings are also more energy-efficient. In fact, we are constructing two buildings right now, which will be green-certified.”

An example of successful partnership between Meralco and Megaworld at work was during the planning, construction, and electrification of 8 Upper McKinley. Meralco provided useful information such as the proper types of elevators to install, what kind of lighting the building required and the most strategic areas to place them. It also provided

data about how the size of entrances affects cooling efficiency in the building. With these suggestions, Megaworld can reduce its monthly power costs by an average of 15%. Beyond this, Meralco also advised the property developers about the benefits of the Meralco POP program, which could bring additional savings for the building’s tenants.

Megaworld continues to explore new locations and study new opportunities. Some of its projects include a 54-hectare property in Iloilo, a 16-hectare project in Mactan, and a residential community in Tagaytay, where it has set its sights on developing the country’s very first vineyard. As Tan says, “Even during the crisis, Megaworld continued to build its portfolio to what it is today. That’s how we were able to maintain our lead.”

Tan further reveals, “We see a very big future in tourism. That is why a lot of our developments now carry a hospitality component. An example of this development is our Newport City, where we have Resorts World Manila. Newport City currently has 1,400 hotel rooms. That number will go to about 3,000 in the next three years. “We feel that this is the trend right now. The Philippines being rich in natural resources has so much potential to attract tourists. We still have a lot of room for growth.”

Megaworld’s relentless drive to create integrated communities across the country stems from one burning vision—a progressive Philippines fueled by an empowered citizenry.

Tan says, “Even in troubled times, Megaworld believed in the Philippines, in our economy. We believed that it would rebound, sooner or later. And so we seized the opportunity to expand when perhaps other developers were reluctant. Not only that, we believe in the Filipino and in his capabilities, and we knew that one day, the Philippines will be number one in BPO. In fact, the Philippines has already overtaken India in voice. The Philippines is now entering another realm, which is knowledge process outsourcing. We believe in our talents and we believe in our economy. That’s why we keep expanding.”

When an industry giant such as Megaworld voices its optimism for the country’s prospects, one can’t help but feel moved, motivated, and inspired. Tan concludes, “We knew that through our example we will inspire other companies to look at the Philippines in a better light. We have a generally young population, and there’s just so much potential for our population right now... We hope that through our example, others will follow.”

2013 MERALCO LUMINARIES NIGHT

Meralco's Partners for Progress are honored in a night to remember

A veritable who's who of Philippine business, commerce and industry was in attendance as the country's largest power distribution firm hosted the 2013 Meralco Luminaries Awards at the Makati Shangri-La. Now on its second year, the awards celebrate the achievements of Meralco's most outstanding customers from commercial and industrial sectors, small and medium enterprises, and local government units. They are the Partners for Progress, each with inspiring stories of innovation, corporate and social responsibility, job creation, and community development, all contributing toward nation building and a progressive, prosperous Philippines.

The Luminaries' program with the theme "World class meets world class," had an electrifying opening salvo with a performance by the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra with Maestro Ryan Cayabyab.

After an introduction by the evening's host, David Celdran, Meralco President and Chief Executive Officer Oscar S. Reyes delivered the opening remarks, and the guest of honor, Raymond A. Acol, Assistant Secretary, Energy Utilization Management who delivered a speech on behalf of Department of Energy Secretary Carlos Jericho L. Petilla, who had to suddenly attend to an urgent matter. The candidates for the various Luminaries Awards were presented by Mr. Reyes and Meralco Senior Vice President and Head, Customer Retail Services and Corporate Communications Alfredo S. Panlilio, while short videos of the nominees' stories and achievements played on the big screens surrounding the stage.

Musical extravaganzas peppered the proceedings, with performances by violinist Bryson Andres; a medley of songs from Les Miserables by Tippy Dos Santos, Audie Gemora, Carla Guevarra, Jon Joven, Gian Magdangal, Robert Sena, and Cris Villonco with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra; and Asia's songbird, Regine Velasquez.



From left: Oscar S. Reyes (Meralco, President & CEO), Amitabha Basu (Indo Phil), Dan Lachica (SEPI for Hoya Glass Philippines), Lana Parungao (NutriAsia), Wellington Tong (Pag-Asa Steel), Pedro Jose Palomino (CEMEX), Alfredo S. Panlilio (Meralco, Senior VP & Head for Customer Retail Services and Corporate Communications)



From left: Oscar S. Reyes, Jorge Araneta (Araneta Center), Manny Blas (FBDC), Kevin Tan (Megaworld), Joey Lina (Manila Hotel), Alfredo Pascual (UP), Alfredo S. Panlilio (Meralco)



From left: Victor Genuino (Meralco, VP & Head for Corporate Business Group), Dingo Bonifacio (Remec Broadband Wireless Philippines, International), Jose Reyes (ERC), Jericho Petilla (DOE Secretary), Alfredo S. Panlilio (Meralco)



From left: Peter Coyiuto (First Life Financial Corporation), Manny and Rowena Blas (Fort Bonifacio Development Corporation), William Tan Untiong (Jollibee Foods Corporation)



Hans Sy (SM Prime Holdings) with Donnie Tantoco (Shopwise and Rustan's Supercenters)



Charlie Rufino (The Net Group) with Bro. Armin Luistro (Department of Education Secretary)



Wellington Tong (Pag-Asa Steel) and Ver Arevalo (Meralco, Relationship Manager)

Finally, the 2013 Luminaries were revealed. Meralco Chairman Manny V. Pangilinan, President and CEO Oscar S. Reyes, Philippine Ambassador to Japan and Director of Meralco, Manuel M. Lopez, and last year's Luminaries assembled onstage to announce the winners, led by Megaworld in the Commercial corporate division and Indo Phil Textile Mills in the Industrial corporate category.

A special award was presented to the former Chief of the Philippine National Police, Gen. Nicanor Bartolome, who was able to strengthen the PNP's partnership with Meralco. Under his watch, electricity pilfering has been on the decline and he also paved the way for a long-running program with Meralco to rehabilitate, improve, and upgrade the electrical system of PNP's headquarters. These efforts helped the PNP improve its performance and public approval, contributing significantly to its role in nation building.

Following a toast to the winners and nominees by Meralco's chairman, a closing number—a moving interpretation of "Bayan Ko" and "Lupang Hinirang" from 110 of the night's musical guests, coinciding with Meralco's number of years—brought the curtain down on one unforgettable event.



Meralco's Oscar S. Reyes presents a special award to Gen. Nicanor Bartolome of the Philippine National Police.



Kevin Tan accepts Megaworld's award from Hans Sy of SM Prime Holdings.



From left: Cecile Domingo (Meralco, VP Corporate Business Group-Private Sector), Marife Zamora (Convergys), Jojo Lloren (Convergys), Genie Pangilinan (Meralco, Relationship Manager)



From left: Jorge and Stella Araneta (Araneta Center), Darryl Francisco (Meralco, Relationship Manager)



From left: Ronald Torres (Meralco, Relationship Manager), Paul Arcenas and Pedro Jose Palomino (Cemex) and Victor Genuino (Meralco)



From left: Meralco Board Member Estelito Mendoza, Dr. Alfredo Pascual (University of the Philippines), Ponciano Rivera (University of the Philippines Alumni Association), Alfredo S. Panlilio, William S. Pamintuan, (Meralco First Vice President & Head, Legal)



From left: Oscar S. Reyes, Manuel V. Pangilinan, Amitabha Basu and Kishan Singhania (Indo Phil Textile Mills), Manuel M. Lopez (Meralco Director & Philippine Ambassador to Japan), Kunihiro Tsuru (Rohm Electronics Philippines, Inc)

LIGHTING THE WAY



MERALCO brings the gift of light to the students of Isla Verde

Living on an island with few modern conveniences just got a little bit easier for the residents of Isla Verde, Batangas. The island's population of 7,000, including the students at its six elementary schools, had to endure darkness and the difficulties of not having electricity until Meralco and its social development arm, One Meralco Foundation (OMF), acted decisively to address the problem. Aided by its like-minded partners such as local governments, the Department of Education, the Department of Energy and USAID's Alliance for Mindanao and Multi-Regional Renewable/Rural Energy Development (AMORE), and bolstered by the spirit of volunteerism among its employees, OMF was able to install solar panels at each of the island's schools earlier this year. Reynold Porcino, Parent Teacher Association (PTA) president of the San Agapito Elementary School, couldn't be happier now that there is electricity to create a better learning environment. His satisfaction is echoed by Norma Quidado, the head of Liponpon Elementary School, who, not too long ago, dismissed the thought of teaching children through electric-powered visual aids as a pipe dream.



TANGIBLE BENEFITS

Only a few months after the solar panels were installed, changes in the Isla Verde schools are tangible. For one, classes don't have to be cancelled during inclement weather since the rooms are well-lit, enabling teachers and students to go on with their work. Quidado and other teachers are happy that they can use educational aids such as CDs and DVDs regularly to facilitate learning, since students are more attentive when visuals come into play. Before the solar panels were installed, they could only use these aids sparingly since they did not have enough money to buy crude oil to run the generator. Now that they can access information through the Internet and TV, students of Isla Verde no longer lag behind their counterparts in mainland Batangas in terms of available knowledge and now have a better sense of the issues going on around them. Even on the administration side, school processes have become more efficient with computers quickly churning out the needed data, and information is readily available to students. Teachers no longer need to go to the city to have test papers printed. What all these amount to is an enhanced learning experience for students and a deeper sense of fulfillment among the teachers, not to mention the measure of pride they give to parents who work hard for their children's future. School head Jolly Luces of San Agustin Kanluran Elementary School noted a new sense of delight among students and their parents. "The children are excited to learn. Even the parents couldn't be happier in the change in their children's attitude," she said.

DREAMS FULFILLED

Many parents like Porcino are thankful that OMF and its partners have enabled the island's residents, particularly the students, to enjoy the benefits of electricity and improve their lives. "As the PTA president, I thank the OMF for bringing light to our classrooms. It is as if the children are studying in the city; they won't be left behind, even if they're studying here on an island. It's a big change, as parents, we can't express enough gratitude for what has been given to us," he said in the vernacular. Quidado is likewise thankful for the solar-powered electricity, which is brightening up not only the schools but the people's lives as well. "In the past, having electricity was just a dream. We all thought electricity was reserved for the towns and cities, but because of OMF, our dreams became reality," she said.

Right: DepEd Asec. Rey Laguda; Meralco SVP and Head of Customer Retail Services and Corporate Communications Alfredo S. Panlilio; OMF Independent Trustee Dr. Emerlinda Roman; USAID Mission Director Reed Aeschliman; fmr. DOE Usec. Jose Layug; Ambassadors of Light Shamcey Supsup; DepEd Secretary Bro. Armin Luistro, FSC; City Councilor Marvey Mariño; AMORE Chief of Party Laurie Navarro SunPower Corporation Communications, CSR and Employee Engagement Manager Ana Coscolluela; OMF President Jeffrey O. Tarayao.

REACHING OUT

With the Isla Verde schools already enjoying the benefits of electricity, OMF is reaching out to bring the gift of light to ten more community schools situated in the islands of Cagbalete and Cagsay III in Mauban, Quezon; Cabul-an and Pandanon in Bohol; Linapacan and El Nido in Northern Palawan; and the Dinagat Islands. OMF President Jeffrey O. Tarayao underscores Meralco's commitment to light up more schools in remote areas consistent with the company's values of malasakit (compassion) and makabayan (patriotism). "We help ensure that Filipinos have equal chances for a brighter future and their journey towards that can start with better learning environment and more opportunities for growth," he said.





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