Xiaomi announces new phones, air purifiers

XIAOMI last week announced the Redmi Note 11 series' availability in international markets with four new devices.

The four devices are the Redmi Note 11 Pro 5G, Redmi Note 11 Pro, Redmi Note 11S and Redmi Note 11, Xiaomi said in a press release.

"Rising to the challenge to bring even stronger specs and features, Redmi Note 11 series again brings powerful upgrades to its camera system, charging speed, display, and SoC — making flagship-level smartphone performance more accessible than before," it said.

The Redmi Note 11 Pro 5G, Redmi Note 11 Pro and Redmi Note 11S feature 108MP primary sensors. The main camera has a Samsung HM2 sensor with a large 1/1.52" size with 9-in-1 pixel binning technology as well as dual native ISO. They likewise feature a 8MP ultra-wide angle camera and a 2MP macro camera.

"Additionally, the 2MP depth camera on Redmi Note 11 Pro, Redmi Note 11S and Redmi Note 11 allows you to create a natural bokeh effect for your portrait shots. The front of Redmi Note 11 Pro 5G, Redmi Note 11 Pro and Redmi Note 11S feature a 16MP front camera that can capture clear, natural-looking selfies," Xiaomi added.

The Redmi Note 11 series have a refresh rate up to 120Hz and a touch sampling rate up to 360Hz and screen sizes of 6.67-inch and 6.43-inch.

The Redmi Note 11 Pro 5G has the octa-core processor Snapdragon 695, while the Redmi Note 11 Pro and Redmi Note 11S have an octa-core MediaTek Helio G96 processor and up to 8GB of RAM. Redmi Note 11 is equipped with a Snapdragon 680 processor.

All four Redmi Note 11 series devices have a 5,000mAh large-capacity battery and allow fast charging.

The Redmi Note 11 Pro 5G, Redmi Note 11 Pro and Redmi Note 11S come in three variants: 6GB+64GB, 6GB+128GB and 8GB+128GB, while Redmi Note 11 comes in three variants: 4GB+64GB, 4GB+128GB and 6GB+128GB.

The phones will be available in the country by Feb. 11.

AIR PURIFIERS

Meanwhile, Xiaomi also introduced upgrades to its Xiaomi Smart Air Purifier Series — the Xiaomi Smart Air Purifier 4 Pro, 4, and 4 Lite.

"The brand-new series promises Xiaomi Fans a healthier, cleaner, and reduced-allergen indoor air environment year-round, with options for different home spaces and family needs," Xiaomi said.

Xiaomi Smart Air Purifier 4 Pro has a 3-in-1 filtration system that combines electrostatic charge and mechanical technologies to trap 99.97% of air pollutants as small as 0.3 microns. It has both PM2.5 and PM10 sensors and an ionizer. It also offers 500m3/h PCADR and 185m3/h FCADR, which means it can filter the air of a 40m2 living room entirely every 15 minutes.

The model also has a low-noise running mode as well as an OLED touch display. The device can be controlled remotely via the Xiaomi Home app.

The Xiaomi Smart Air Purifier 4 Pro is priced at P11,999, while the 4 and 4 Lite cost P8,999 and P6,999 respectively.

They will be available via Xiaomi's Lazada flagship store starting Feb. 11. **— BVR**

Couchbase sees opportunities in PHL online gaming, BPOs

By Arjay L. Balinbin
Senior Reporter

COUCHBASE, INC., a technology company based in the United States, is targeting opportunities in various sectors in the Philippines, especially in online gaming and business process outsourcing (BPO), a company official said.

"Impressive growth in online gaming and business process outsourcing, as well as other sectors like banking and financial services, remote support, IT (information technology) development, and retail, combined with an increased adoption of cloud, big data, and IoT (internet of things), make the Philippines a lucrative market," Couchbase Regional Vice-President for Asia Pacific and Japan Stuart Fisher told *BusinessWorld* in a recent e-mail interview.

Couchbase is a modern cloud-native database for enterprise applications. It enables developers and architects to build, deploy, and run mission-critical applications.

"As we move into the cloud-as-a-service ecosystem, or economy, a big part of the engine room is being driven out of the Philippines, in areas such as core development, application design, and delivery of services. All of these areas are going to be fundamentally based on next-generation technologies and capabilities driven by the cloud," Mr. Fisher said.

He also noted that gamification has taken a huge leap in the Philippines.

"The mobile games segment's growth trajectory is expected to continue over the next five years, with forecast revenues reaching as much as $1.52 billion by 2025," he said, citing data from market and consumer data provider Statista.

"With such a big slice of the pie, developers need to react quickly. To do that, they need to thrive in the open-source community, in which our technologies are well suited and positioned to support digitalization strategies and enable growth," he added.

The Philippines is a global leader in BPO, where companies are rapidly migrating to the cloud as a result of the remote working setup and the use of data and analytics to better understand customers.

BPO is the largest private sector employer in the country, accounting for 10% to 15% of the global market, according to data analytics and consulting company GlobalData. "It has grown at a compound annual rate of 10% over the past decade."

On what surprises Couchbase has in store for its clients in the Philippines, Mr. Stuart said the company hopes the "versatility" of its solutions will support organizations to scale up in their current environment at any point in time, minus the financial burden of re-development, reworking or modernization initiatives.

"Our database-as-a-service solution delivers exceptional capabilities, flexibility, and cost savings, while assuring excellent performance and faster times to market."

Google shakes off Omicron with shopping ads, cloud revenue

GOOGLE parent Alphabet, Inc. posted fourth-quarter sales and profit that topped analysts' projections, showing the resilience of its advertising business in the face of major economic upheaval as the pandemic persists. The shares soared in late trading.

Sales, excluding partner payouts, rose 33% to $61.9 billion, compared with the $59.4-billion average analyst estimate. Google's advertising revenue also grew by 33% during the holiday quarter, despite the disruptions to its biggest categories, travel and retail, from the spread of the Omicron coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) variant and supply chain crunches. The company also declared a 20-for-1 stock split.

Alphabet has continued to profit from the major trends that emerged during the pandemic, as people increasingly turned to online shopping and as marketing and business software budgets shifted to the internet. Google posted robust gains for two critical divisions, cloud and YouTube. But the company's main contributor was its flagship search business, which is seeing gains from a deep investment in e-commerce.

"The scale of its combined advertising businesses cannot be overstated," Sophie Lund-Yates, equity analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown, wrote in a note after earnings. "If you own a business in today's world, chances are you will need to pay to get that marketing material in front of Google or YouTube's users."

Shares surged 8.7% in extended trading, after closing at $2,752.88. The stock has declined about 5% so far this year.

Since the start of the pandemic, Google has made up for declining in-person retail by luring more merchants to sell items on its shopping service and run product ads on search. Even during the holiday quarter, when Omicron cases spiked, consumers continued to rely on online shopping and travel services, clicking on those ads.

"More budgets are now coming back," Andrew Boone, an analyst at JMP Securities, said after the release. "Google is benefiting from that trend." Competing digital advertising businesses, including Meta Platforms, Inc. and Snap, Inc., rose after the results.

Retail ads were the biggest contributor to Google's growth, chief business officer Philipp Schindler told investors on the call. During the fourth quarter, YouTube launched a new shopping initiative with some of its young star creators. — ***Bloomberg***

FULL STORY
Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link **<bit.ly/Google020322>**

MREIT set to acquire P20B office assets this year

By MIGUEL ONGPIN

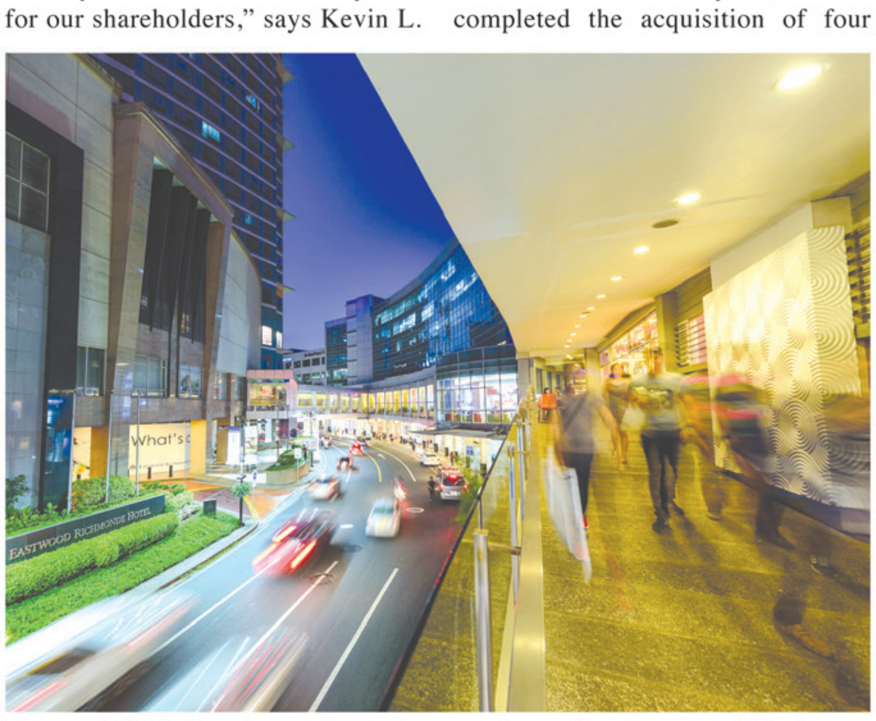

McKinley Hill continues to attract some of the country's top firms and multinational companies due to its strategic location and exciting township components.

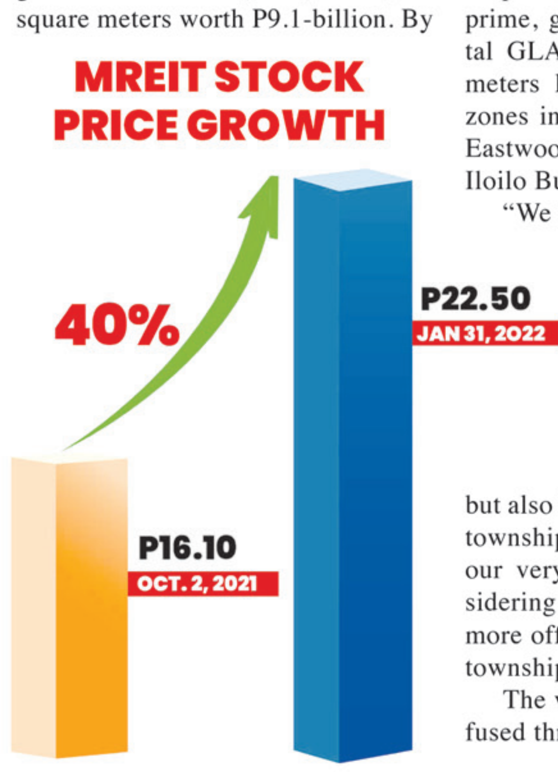
MREIT, Inc., the REIT company of township developer Megaworld, continues to deliver on its promise to investors about having the longest runway for growth, as it is set to acquire additional office assets worth around P20-billion.

This asset injection, which will come from office properties in various Megaworld townships across the country, will eventually increase its portfolio value by 34% from the current P58.5-billion to P78.5-billion by end-2022.

"MREIT is looking to surpass its target for 2022 in terms of asset injection. These new assets may include some of our 'built-to-suit' properties, which are considered superior in both quality and lease tenure. These new properties have a multinational tenant base, which include large financial, healthcare, technology, and consulting firms. We earlier announced an additional 44,300 square meters by end of the year, but we are working to further bulk it up with more assets as we continuously look for ways to increase dividend yields for our shareholders," says Kevin L. Tan, president and CEO, MREIT.

In December last year, MREIT completed the acquisition of four commercial properties with a total gross leasable area (GLA) of 55,700 square meters worth P9.1-billion. By the end of 2021, MREIT's expanded portfolio already consisted of 14 prime, grade A buildings with a total GLA of around 280,000 square meters located in PEZA-accredited zones in the sponsor's townships of Eastwood City, McKinley Hill, and Iloilo Business Park.


Three of MREIT's prime office assets are located at Eastwood City in Quezon City, which is dubbed as the Philippines' first-ever cyberpark.



"We believe that the current business conditions are conducive to the attainment of our growth plans. We are currently looking at several properties for potential acquisition, not just in these three townships but also in two more new Megaworld townships. We are very optimistic of our very long growth runway considering that Megaworld is building more offices and even launched new townships last year," adds Tan.

The various properties will be infused throughout the year with funding expected to come primarily from equity and potentially some debt. Currently, MREIT's percentage of debt versus total Deposited Properties is at around 12%, well below the 35% cap set in the REIT Law.

"There are still a number of items that we have to finalize, and as everyone knows, we have to go through the process as set under the REIT Law. But our objective for the year is to deliver on this enhanced investment plan and ensure the sustained growth of the company," Tan explains.

With the support of its sponsor Megaworld, which is acknowledged as the country's largest office landlord, MREIT aspires to be one of the largest REITs in Southeast Asia. Looking forward, MREIT aims to have a portfolio GLA of 500,000 square meters by 2024 and increase this further to 1-million square meters before the end of the decade.