

Samsung launches new midrange Galaxy A series smartphones

SAMSUNG Electronics Co., Ltd. last week announced its latest midrange Galaxy A series smartphones, the A73, A53 and A33, which have 5G connectivity and better battery life.

“We believe everyone deserves the opportunity to experience the positive impact mobile technology can have on their lives,” TM Roh, President and Head of Samsung Electronics’ MX (Mobile eXperience) Business, was quoted as saying in a statement. “With the latest Galaxy A series release, we’re making it easier than ever to enjoy Galaxy’s advanced, innovative mobile experience at a great value.”

The Galaxy A73 5G has a 6.7-inch Super AMOLED+ display with a 120Hz refresh rate, while the Galaxy A53 has a 6.5-inch Super AMOLED display with a 120Hz refresh rate for an immersive experience. The A33 features a 6.4-inch Super AMOLED display with a 90Hz refresh rate. The phones are made with Corning Gorilla Glass 5 and have IP67 water and dust resistance.

The Galaxy A series phones are also equipped with 5000mAh batteries, which can power up to two days of use and support 25W super fast charging.

The phones’ AI-powered camera is powered by a 5nm processor for improved image and video quality even with low lighting. The A73 has a 108-megapixel (MP) main camera as well as 12MP ultra-wide, 5MP depth and 5MP macro lenses for its rear setup and a 32MP front camera, while the Galaxy A53’s quad-camera system features a 64MP main camera, a 12MP ultra-wide lens and 5MP depth and macro lenses. It also has a 32MP front camera.

Lastly, the A33’s rear setup has a 48MP main camera, an 8MP ultra-wide lens, 2MP depth and 5MP macro sensors, while it has a 13MP front camera.

The Galaxy A series does not come with a charger plug and is packaged with sustainable materials. The Galaxy A53 5G also guarantees up to four generations of One UI and Android OS upgrades and up to five years of security updates to maximize its life cycle.

The new phones are secured by Samsung Knox. The Secure Folder offers an encrypted, digital safe, while Private Share allows users to control access to files.

The Galaxy A73 5G will be available starting April 22 and will come in Awesome Gray, Awesome White, and Awesome Mint for P29,990 (8GB RAM + 256GB memory), P27,990 (8+128GB) and P26,990 (6+128GB, online exclusive).

Meanwhile, the Galaxy A53 5G and A33 5G will come in Awesome Black, Awesome White, Awesome Blue, and Awesome Peach variants.

The Galaxy A53 5G will be available starting April 1 in all authorized Samsung Stores and online for P25,490 (8GB+256GB), P23,490 (8+128GB) and P22,990 (6+128GB, online exclusive).

The Galaxy A33 5G will be available beginning April 22 for P21,990 (8+256GB), P19,990 (8+128GB) and P18,990 (6+128GB, online exclusive). Its white 128GB and 256GB versions are also online exclusives.

Also, a new Onyx color of the Galaxy Buds2 and Buds Live is set to be launched in April. — **BVR**

Secuna eyes partnership with gov’t for cyberattack simulation

By Arjay L. Balinbin
Senior Reporter

SECUNA, a cybersecurity testing platform provider in the Philippines, said it is in talks with a national government agency to use its platform “for free.”

The company is serious about “collaborating” with the government on cybersecurity, Secuna Chief Executive Officer Allan Jay “AJ” Dumanhug told *BusinessWorld* in a recent virtual interview.

“Why for free? Our competitors in the United States are actually doing it in a small amount, but we want to do it for free because we want to help the government secure

our countrymen, our citizens, as they also have our data,” he added.

On its website, Secuna describes itself as “the biggest and most trusted cybersecurity testing platform” in the country helping startups and small and medium-sized enterprises “by connecting them to the most advanced and highly-vetted cybersecurity professionals in the world to simulate cyberattacks and find security flaws that real-world malicious hackers can exploit and leverage to gain access to IT systems.”

Mr. Dumanhug noted that Secuna is also developing a business model with government agencies that is similar to “Hack the Pentagon” and “Hack the Air Force” cybersecurity programs in the US, in which ethical hackers identify se-

curity holes in an entity’s computer networks.

“We are planning the same thing like ‘Hack the Comelec’ (Commission on Elections). So that’s how we will generate revenue,” he added.

“This is a community of researchers, and we want to bring this idea to the Philippines.”

Data analytics and consulting company GlobalData said organizations should start strengthening their cybersecurity defenses amid the Ukraine-Russia crisis.

“Malicious state-sponsored cyber activities have historically escalated when geopolitical tensions are high. Concerns about increased cyber activity amidst the Russia-Ukraine crisis serve as a stark reminder of the importance

of identifying the threat model and altering risk management objectives accordingly,” Manish Dixit, principal disruptive tech analyst at GlobalData, said in a statement.

Pranjali Mujumdar, also a GlobalData tech analyst, said companies must also invest more in information security, with risk management teams aiming for a fine balance of technology, people, and processes to manage risk.

“Both Russia and Ukraine have a high level of expertise in information technology and computer hacking, thus, cyberwarfare can not only target big companies or government organizations; any small business involved in the public sector’s supply chain will also be vulnerable.”

Nvidia unveils data-center chips aimed at stretching its lead in AI

NVIDIA Corp. told investors it’s focused on maintaining growth with new products, including speedier data-center chips, rather than embarking on more aggressive stock-buyback plans as some shareholders had hoped.

At the company’s investor meeting on Tuesday, Chief Financial Officer Colette Kress said that the company’s priority is using cash to expand its business. Nvidia has bought back \$2 billion in stock during the current quarter, she noted, but the company hasn’t increased its budget for repurchases. Nvidia has \$5 billion of buyback authorization left, Ms. Kress said.

Some investors had been eyeing additional buybacks after Nvidia walked away from a \$40-billion plan to acquire Arm Ltd. in February, according to Citigroup, Inc. and Bank of America Corp. That deal, which failed to overcome regulatory opposition, would have been the biggest takeover in chip-industry history.

Nvidia shares slipped as much as 2.5% following Ms. Kress’ remarks, but soon recovered. Though Nvidia is down nearly 10% this year, that’s in line with a broader slide for chip stocks.

Nvidia’s focus now is new products and technology aimed at continuing its rapid growth in artificial intelligence (AI) processing. Graphics chips

based on the new “Hopper” design will debut later this year, the company said. The processors are created with as many as 80 billion transistors and — when paired with new connecting chips — will massively speed up the development of software that understands human speech and does genomic research.

Under Chief Executive Officer Jensen Huang, Nvidia has parlayed its dominance of graphics chips prized by computer gamers into a lucrative position in server technology. The company supplies chips to the owners of some of the world’s largest data centers, which use the technology to power the artificial intelligence software needed to make sense of the growing flood of digital information.

Mr. Huang saw the opportunity early and tasked Nvidia’s engineers with adapting its product to become crucial to this growing type of computing. The company branched out with new types of semiconductors, computer systems, software and services to keep it ahead of the competition.

Nvidia’s Hopper technology, named for computer science pioneer Grace Hopper, is its latest offering. It contains circuitry specifically designed to run so-called Transformer machine learning models, which are used to improve the way that

machines understand and interpret human speech. Hopper will also better link with other chips, allowing it to remove some of the bottlenecks caused by transferring huge data sets between parts of a computer. Nvidia will rely on contract manufacturer Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co. to make the chips.

Alibaba Cloud, Amazon.com, Inc.’s AWS, Alphabet, Inc.’s Google Cloud and Microsoft Corp.’s Azure are among the large companies that will adopt the new chips, Nvidia said. In addition, computer makers such as Dell Technologies, Inc. and Hewlett Packard Enterprise Co. will offer machines based on the silicon.

Nvidia also announced the availability of the Grace CPU Superchip, its brand name for a new central processing unit for high-end data-center computing. That product is its initial foray into the bigger market for central processing units (CPUs) — a field where Intel Corp. technology remains dominant but is facing greater pressure from new entrants.

It’s been six weeks since Nvidia walked away from its plan to acquire Arm, an influential UK chip designer, from SoftBank Group Corp. SoftBank is now pursuing an initial public offering for the business instead. —

Bloomberg

Manulife China Bank LIFE ASSURANCE CORPORATION				
Single Pricing Investment Funds of Variable Life Insurance Contracts				
Fund	Current Week	Unit Price		
		March 22, 2022	Previous Week	March 15, 2022
Peso Secure Fund	1.690	1.690	1.695	
Peso Diversified Value Fund	1.852	1.849	1.844	
Peso Growth Fund	2.849	2.849	2.799	
Peso Dynamic Allocation Fund	1.011	1.011	0.993	
Peso Target Distribution Fund	0.792	0.792	0.785	
Peso Cash Fund	0.991	0.991	0.991	
Peso Wealth Optimizer 2026 Fund	0.889	0.889	0.876	
Peso Wealth Optimizer 2031 Fund	0.850	0.850	0.832	
Peso Wealth Optimizer 2036 Fund	0.832	0.832	0.811	
Peso Reserve Fund	0.859	0.859	0.829	
USD Secure Fund	1.571	1.571	1.568	
USD Asia Pacific Bond Fund	1.067	1.067	1.079	
USD Global Target Income Fund	0.828	0.828	0.812	
USD ASEAN Growth Fund	1.531	1.531	1.494	
Qatarbank Dollar Fixed Income VUL Fund	1.036	1.036	1.036	
USD Asia First Fund	1.275	1.275	1.215	
USD Asia Pacific Property Income Fund	0.937	0.937	0.904	
RFP Asia Pacific Property Income Fund	0.929	0.929	0.898	
RFP Tiger Growth Fund	0.700	0.700	0.647	
USD Tiger Growth Fund	0.636	0.636	0.583	
RFP Global Preferred Securities Income Fund	1.001	1.001	0.994	
USD Global Preferred Securities Income Fund	0.919	0.919	0.911	
RFP US Growth Fund	1.088	1.088	1.056	
USD US Growth Fund	0.992	0.992	0.943	

Manulife China Bank LIFE ASSURANCE CORPORATION				
Dual Pricing Investment Funds of Variable Life Insurance Contracts				
Fund	Current Week	Unit Bid Price		
		March 22, 2022	Previous Week	March 15, 2022
Peso Bond Fund	1.995	1.995	2.001	
Peso Stable Fund	1.869	1.869	1.914	
Peso Equity Fund	1.969	1.969	1.914	
Peso Balanced Fund	1.025	1.025	1.007	
Peso Target Income Fund	0.806	0.806	0.799	
U.S. Dollar Bond Fund	1.643	1.643	1.640	

Fund	Current Week	Unit Offer Price		
		March 22, 2022	Previous Week	March 15, 2022
Peso Bond Fund	2.025	2.025	2.031	
Peso Stable Fund	1.918	1.918	1.909	
Peso Equity Fund	1.999	1.999	1.943	
Peso Balanced Fund	1.041	1.041	1.022	
Peso Target Income Fund	0.818	0.818	0.811	
U.S. Dollar Bond Fund	1.668	1.668	1.665	

Converge gets go signal for P20-billion bond offering



LISTED fiber internet service provider Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. has obtained approval from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) for its plan to raise up to P20 billion from the sale of bonds.

“The SEC has considered favorably the fixed-rate bond offering by Converge Information and Communications Technology Solutions, Inc.,” the agency said in a statement on Wednesday.

It said the commission sitting en banc resolved on March 22 to render effective the registration statements of Converge covering up to P20-billion shelf-registered bonds.

The offering is subject to the company’s “compliance with certain remaining requirements,” the agency also said.

The SEC noted that Converge may offer the P20-billion fixed-rate bonds in tranches within three years.

“For the first tranche, the listed internet provider will offer to the public up to P5 billion of bonds due 2027, with an oversubscription option of up to P5 billion.”

“Assuming the oversubscription option is fully exercised, the company could net up to P9.87 billion from the offer,” the agency added.

Proceeds, according to the SEC, will be used to fund Converge’s capital expenditures (capex) in connection with “plant equipment and other property, plant, and equipment and intangible assets for the expansion of its nationwide fiber network.”

The first tranche of bonds will be offered at face value from March 14 to 18, and will be listed on the Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. on March 25.

The regulator noted that Converge engaged BDO Capital & Investment Corp. as the transaction’s issue man-

ager, while working with BPI Capital Corp. as joint lead underwriter and bookrunner.

Converge expects to spend around P26-28 billion for capex projects this year, higher than last year’s P25 billion. The company’s capex initiatives for the year will include selected investments into international subsea cables and enhancement of its information technology systems.

Converge said its net income more than doubled to P7.16 billion in 2021 from P3.39 billion in 2020. Its revenues increased by 69% to P26.48 billion in 2021 from P15.65 billion previously.

The company saw its earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization margins expand to 55.9% last year from 52.5% in 2020.

Converge ICT shares closed 5.93% higher at P28.80 apiece on Wednesday. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

AllDay Marts income up 80% to P395 million as sales climb

SUPERMARKET operator AllDay Marts, Inc. reported unaudited net income growth of 80% to P394.9 million in 2021 on higher sales productivity and lower operating expense ratios.

“AllDay’s remarkable performance for 2021 is a continued validation of our value proposition, and bodes well for the company’s long-term prospects. AllDay’s distinct in-store experience, coupled with an increasingly efficient e-commerce model, has proved to truly resonate with our growing customer base of Filipinos who show an increasing

preference for differentiated and experience-driven retail,” AllDay Chairman Manuel B. Villar, Jr. said in a statement on Wednesday.

In 2021, AllDay reported that sales were up by 19% to P 9.46 billion, while earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) also improved by 9.1% in 2021 from 7.9% in 2020.

“As the country is well on its way to recovery from the pandemic, we will continue to focus on growing the business towards our 100-store milestone by 2026,” Mr. Villar said.

As of January, AllDay has a network of 35 stores in the country.

Last year, the company had its P6.03-billion initial public offering, which was about four times oversubscribed, raising a combined P4.52 billion by selling 7.52 billion shares at 60 centavos each.

“AllDay’s remarkable growth in 2021 befits our first year on the PSE (Philippine Stock Exchange). We believe that this puts us on strong footing to continue implementing our blueprint for AllDay: an in-store experience comparable to the best that the world has

to offer, featuring even smarter customer facing technology, comprehensive product offerings, curated international selections, as well as better-tuned e-commerce capabilities. On the strength of these, we remain confident in our ability to deliver even better value to our stakeholders,” AllDay Vice-Chairman Camille A. Villar said.

AllDay Chief Executive Officer Frances Rosalie T. Coloma said the company’s performance in 2021 “confirms the Filipino market’s affinity for upgraded experiences — both in-store and online.”

“With fresh funds available to us by way of our successful IPO, we are put in a much stronger financial position as we can move forward with minimal debt load. This, in turn, allows us to fully focus our capacities towards our store network expansion. As we ride the tail end of the pandemic on this high note, we are increasingly confident as we continue to bring AllDay to even more locations across the country.”

At the stock exchange on Wednesday, AllDay shares were up 4.44% or P0.02 to close at P0.47 apiece. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocsos**

Manulife				
Single Pricing Investment Funds of Variable Life Insurance Contracts				
Fund	Current Week	Unit Price		
		March 22, 2022	Previous Week	March 15, 2022
Peso Secure Fund	1.691	1.691	1.696	
Peso Diversified Value Fund	1.862	1.862	1.873	
Peso Growth Fund	2.923	2.923	2.841	
Peso Dynamic Allocation Fund	1.015	1.015	0.997	
Peso Target Distribution Fund	0.798	0.798	0.791	
Peso Cash Fund	1.016	1.016	1.016	
Peso Wealth Optimizer 2026 Fund	0.944	0.944	0.930	
Peso Wealth Optimizer 2031 Fund	0.909	0.909	0.889	
Peso Wealth Optimizer 2036 Fund	0.898	0.898	0.875	
Peso Reserve Fund	0.856	0.856	0.828	
Empire Fund	0.887	0.887	0.863	
USD Secure Fund	1.592	1.592	1.590	
USD Asia Pacific Bond Fund	1.101	1.101	1.100	
USD Global Target Income Fund	0.824	0.824	0.807	
USD ASEAN Growth Fund	1.551	1.551	1.515	
USD Asia Pacific Property Income Fund	0.935	0.935	0.902	
RFP Asia Pacific Property Income Fund	0.917	0.917	0.887	
RFP Tiger Growth Fund	0.694	0.694	0.637	
USD Tiger Growth Fund	0.628	0.628	0.575	
RFP Global Preferred Securities Income Fund	1.007	1.007	1.000	
USD Global Preferred Securities Income Fund	0.917	0.917	0.909	
RFP US Growth Fund	1.109	1.109	1.056	
USD US Growth Fund	0.992	0.992	0.941	

Manulife				
Dual Pricing Investment Funds of Variable Life Insurance Contract				
Fund	Current Week	Unit Bid Price		
		March 22, 2022	Previous Week	March 15, 2022
Peso Bond Fund	2.876	2.876	2.885	
Peso Stable Fund	2.849	2.849	2.836	
Peso Equity Fund	2.182	2.182	2.120	
Peso Balanced Fund	1.037	1.037	1.020	
Peso Target Income Fund	0.814	0.814	0.806	
U.S. Dollar Bond Fund	2.273	2.273	2.270	

Fund	Current Week	Unit Offer Price		
		March 22, 2022	Previous Week	March 15, 2022
Peso Bond Fund	2.920	2.920	2.929	
Peso Stable Fund	2.892	2.892	2.879	
Peso Equity Fund	2.215	2.215	2.152	
Peso Balanced Fund	1.053	1.053	1.036	
Peso Target Income Fund	0.826	0.826	0.818	
U.S. Dollar Bond Fund	2.308	2.308	2.305	