

Smart adds 2,500 5G base stations nationwide

PLDT, Inc. said on Monday that its wireless arm Smart Communications, Inc. has added 2,500 more fifth-generation (5G) base stations across the country as of the end of June.

"As of end-June 2022, Smart has rolled out around 77,100 total base stations nationwide, supporting its 3G, 4G/LTE (long-term evolution) and 5G customers," PLDT said in an e-mailed statement.

"This includes 7,300 5G base stations. Compared to a year ago, Smart has rolled out 2,500 additional 5G base stations across the country," it added.

Smart deployed most of its new 5G base stations in Metro Manila, Tarlac City, Silang in Cavite, and Laguna's Cabuyao, Lumban and Santa Rosa, among others.

Citing the latest Ericsson Mobility Report, PLDT said 5G mobile subscriptions will surpass one billion this year.

"In South East Asia and Oceania, where the Philippines belongs, 5G subscriptions were around 15 million at the end of 2021 and are expected to more than double in 2022," it noted.

PLDT Head of Technology Mario G. Tamayo encouraged Smart subscribers to experience 5G.

"PLDT and Smart continue to invest in expanding our 5G network to make it more accessible, boosting the country's digital transformation," he said.

According to the group, its continued expansion puts its wireless arm's 3G, 4G/LTE and 5G population coverage at 97% as of end-June.

"Network-related initiatives made up the bulk of the P89 billion spend for 2021. This brings PLDT's total capex spent over the last 10 years to P518.5 billion. Capex guidance for 2022 is at P85 billion," it noted. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

Toyota PHL banks on more affordable cars for growth

CAR manufacturer Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. is banking on its more affordable product offerings for future growth as local vehicle sales approach pre-pandemic levels.

Jose Maria M. Atienza, the company's senior vice-president and division head for marketing, new mobility, and vehicle logistics, said during an episode of BusinessWorld's One-on-One online interview series on Monday that the company is eyeing more sales in the lower part of the vehicle consumer market.

"The Philippine market is in the stage of motorization, meaning increasing the vehicle density per population. It is quite linked to the level of the Philippine economy," Mr. Atienza said.

He added that growth is expected in the lower-end segment of the market "because of our population and what most of the population can afford."

"By lower-end, we're saying around P1 million and below," he said.

"We are in anticipation of that growth in the lower-end segment. We are reinforcing our product line-up in that area. We recently launched the Lite Ace for the affordable commercial vehicle segment," he said. "On top of that, we also reinforced our line-up with the lower-end models like the Raize, Avanza, and Veloz."

Mr. Atienza said that the local industry's sales are approaching pre-pandemic levels, signaling its recovery.

"Based on January to June (2022) sales, the market was around 85% to 90% versus 2019 levels. It is well on its way to recovery. It also shows around 15% to 20% growth from [the] previous year. The market is recovering," he said.

"For TMPC, we'd like to target the same level as 2019 or pre-pandemic levels. We are looking at 160,000 to 162,000 units sold (this year). We are on our way after [more than] 80,000 units sold from January to June period," he added.

Meanwhile, Mr. Atienza mentioned that the stronger local adoption of electric vehicles will take some time due to their high cost.

"Recently, those (electric vehicles) being introduced are quite still expensive because of the very expensive technology. It will take some time. Again, we see it as soon as we introduce more affordable vehicles, then it is picking up," he said.

With this, Mr. Atienza said that the company has been focusing on electrified vehicles or hybrid vehicles to address the high prices of electric vehicles and the availability of charging stations.

"Especially for battery electric vehicles, we need charging stations. That is why we are focusing on hybrid vehicles because it is what we can use and what we need now in the absence of charging stations," he said.

"We're happy to note that there is a big increase in electrification, especially for Toyota. We've increased our hybrid electric vehicles sales ten-fold from 2019. This is linked to people who were very much conscious with fuel prices," he added.

Currently, the TMPC's hybrid offerings include the Corolla Cross hybrid, the Corolla hybrid, the Camry hybrid, and RAV4 hybrid.

Moving forward, Mr. Atienza said that risks being monitored by the company are those that will affect the prices of their vehicle offerings.

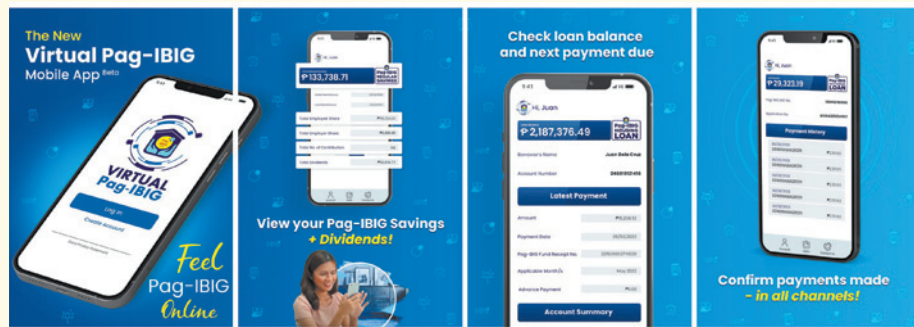
"The main risks are all those factors which make the vehicle prices higher than what the people can afford. It can be the foreign exchange rates, it can be the parts costs and additional taxes," Mr. Atienza said.

Latest data from the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines, Inc. and Truck Manufacturers Association showed that the local industry has sold 182,687 units as of end-July, up 18.4% from the same period last year.

Of the total, Toyota Philippines accounted for 94,026 units sold, equivalent to a 51.47% market share.

The local industry previously announced that it is targeting to sell 336,000 units this year, up by 17% compared with the 268,488 units sold in 2021. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochoa**

Pag-IBIG launches official mobile app



Pag-IBIG members can now view their Pag-IBIG Savings and annual dividends, payments history, and loan balance and dues using their mobile phones with the launch of the agency's official mobile app - the Virtual Pag-IBIG Mobile App - its top officials announced Thursday (18 August).

"Pag-IBIG Fund continues to bring its services closer to its members, this time through the use of information technology. The Virtual Pag-IBIG Mobile App is among our many ways of adhering to the call of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. to make Pag-IBIG's services and benefits even more accessible to our members," said Secretary Jose Rizalino L. Acuzar of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), who serves as chairperson of the 11-member Pag-IBIG Fund Board of Trustees.

The mobile app allows members to view their Pag-IBIG Savings and annual dividends, confirm savings remitted and loan payments made through all channels, and monitor their loan balances and due dates. The mobile app can be accessed by members using their Virtual Pag-IBIG accounts to ensure data protection and security.

Pag-IBIG Fund Chief Executive Officer Acmad Rizaldy P. Moti, meanwhile, stated that members can expect more services to be made available via the Virtual Pag-IBIG Mobile App over the coming weeks. These services include online application for housing and cash loans, as well as online payments.

"We developed the Virtual Pag-IBIG Mobile App following the success of our online service facility, the Virtual Pag-IBIG, which has now served over 3.6 million members since its launch in 2019. And, just like our online service facility, we shall continuously develop our mobile app to have our full range of services so that it can provide all our members another safe, convenient and secure means of accessing their Pag-IBIG benefits, 24/7. With the Virtual Pag-IBIG Mobile App, we are truly bringing Pag-IBIG Fund's services to the palm of our members' hands," Moti said.

The Virtual Pag-IBIG Mobile App is now available via Google Play at <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=pagibigfund.virtualpagibigapp&raii=pagibigfund.virtualpagibigapp>, and shall soon be available on the Apple App Store.

Ramon V. del Rosario Award for Nation Building 2022 honors world-class Filipino entrepreneur, Dr. Tony Tan Caktiong



Jollibee Group Chairman and Founder Dr. Tony Tan Caktiong (4th from right), together with his wife (5th from right) Grace Tan Caktiong, accepts the Ramon V. del Rosario Award for Nation Building. Joining them on stage are (from left to right): JCI Manila President Richard Lim, 2010 RVR Awardee Amb. Jesus P. Tambunting, PHINMA Chairman and CEO Ramon R. del Rosario, Jr., former Chief Justice Artemio V. Panganiban, Asian Institute of Management President, and Dean Dr. Jikyong Kang, and Ambassador Jose L. Cuisia, Jr.

MANILA, Philippines. July 27, 2022 – Jollibee Group Chairman and Founder Dr. Tony Tan Caktiong has been named the 2022 Ramon V. Del Rosario (RVR) Awardee for Nation Building during the awarding ceremony held last July 25 at the Manila Polo Club, Makati.

The RVR Award for Nation Building honors notable individuals worthy of emulation and who have demonstrated outstanding traits such as Entrepreneurial Spirit, National or Global Impact, Corporate Citizenship, and Social Responsibility.

Launched in September 2009, the prestigious award was named after Ramon V. del Rosario Sr., who was the founding president of the Junior Chamber International Manila and was also acknowledged as the "Father of Philippine Modern Industry."

"In honoring outstanding nation builders, we are helping build a business constituency for good. We do not see this as just another recognition ceremony but rather, a recommitment event as well as a continuing clarion call to make business a genuine force for good. I am confident that tonight's honoree will join his fellow awardees in multiplying this force," said PHINMA Chairman and CEO Ramon R. del Rosario, Jr.

Dr. Tan Caktiong was chosen as this year's awardee for his dedication to quality, innovation, and excellence, which propelled the Jollibee Group from its humble beginnings to being one of the largest food companies in the world with 18 brands across 34 countries — putting the Philippines on the global map and being a source of national pride.

Property consultant backs passage of land use law

A PROPERTY consultant is calling for the passage of a law on a national land-use plan to ensure that future infrastructure projects will also respond to the needs of the communities around them.

"It is not enough to have well mastered-planned pockets of development like Rockwell, BGC, Greenhills, or the Commons. You also have to fix the areas around them," said Jaime A. Cura, RGV Group's vice-chairman and former national president of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Associations, Inc., in a recent interview.

He said it is not difficult to understand and accept the need for a more coherent, comprehensive, and sustainable basis for future planning and construction of future projects.

He said there is a need for expensive infrastructure to have an impact on the lives of the people "who have the right to live, work and play."

"And that's why it has now led to the importance and urgency of passing, by legislature, a national land-use plan which has long been delayed and which must be reflected in comprehensive land-use plans for every city or municipality. It is this land-use plan — and forced through proper zoning ordinances — that holds the key to sustained, relevant, and competitive real-estate development," he said.

The proposed National Land Use Act seeks to institutionalize land use and physical planning to determine and evaluate appropriate land use and allocation patterns by following a "National Physical Framework Plan." The framework plan serves as a guide for the planning and management of the country's land and other physical resources at the

national and sub-national levels. It will also indicate broad spatial directions and policy guidelines on protection land use, production land use, settlement development, and infrastructure development.

It aims to clear delineation of land use categories as it will institutionalize four land-use categories, namely: protection land use, production land use, settlements and institutional land use, and infrastructure land use.

Protection land use refers to the use of land primarily for conservation purposes while production land use refers to the use of land in the most efficient sustainable, and equitable utilization, development and management of land for productive purposes, which are not classified for protection land use.

On the other hand, settlements and institutional land use cover the use of urban and rural land for the development and improvement of settlements involving the spatial distribution of population, identification of the roles and functions of key urban centers, determination of relationships among settlement areas, and the provision of basic services and facilities to such settlements.

Lastly, infrastructure land use refers to the use of land dedicated to the provision of basic services that foster economic and other forms of integration necessary for producing or obtaining the material requirements of Filipinos, in an efficient, responsive, safe, and ecologically friendly built environment. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

FULL STORY

Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link <https://bit.ly/3T9c9W>

Prime Infra says Wawa water project to be completed by 2025

A UNIT of Prime Infrastructure Capital, Inc. is targeting to complete the second phase of the Wawa bulk water supply project by 2025 following the completion of its initial phase last June.

In a media release on Monday, Prime Infra said that in June, subsidiary WawaJVCo, Inc. completed the first phase of the project or the Tayabasan weir, a 25-meter-high roller compacted concrete structure designed to deliver 80 million liters per day. It was done ahead of its schedule in October.

The project aims to ensure water security by providing ample water supply

to Metro Manila and Rizal province. Prime Infra said that phase two will eventually deliver at least 518 million liters per day to oftaker Manila Water Co., Inc. and Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

This project is also expected to address problems of flooding in the lower areas of the province of Rizal, and the cities of Marikina and Pasig. Data from the MWSS website said that the project is expected to increase water supply in Metro Manila's east zone by 30%.

Meanwhile, WawaJVCo was hailed as the best infrastructure project plan

developer by the International Finance publication based in the United Kingdom for the Wawa water project.

"This recognition is a testament to Prime Infra's commitment and strong reputation in building critical and socially relevant infrastructure. We thank our project partners and our community stakeholders for their continued trust as we progress further in the construction of this much-needed water supply project," said Prime Infra President and Chief Executive Guillaume Lucci in the press release. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

ESG officers want gov't incentives for sustainability drive

SUSTAINABILITY officers from different companies — Metro Pacific Investment Corp. (MPIC), Prime Infrastructure Capital, Inc., and Maynilad Water Services, Inc. — have highlighted the importance of government incentives in achieving sustainability.

"I think the government has to do its part. Sustainability is a collective responsibility and it can't be just addressed by the private sector; they have to enable everybody," said June Cheryl A. Cabal-Revilla, MPIC executive vice-president, chief sustainability officer and chief risk officer, during the International Association for Business Communicators General Members' meeting on Monday.

"They have to enable [it] by providing support and tax incentives. At the end of the day, what the government does is sustainability-related anyway," she added.

Dave Jesus Devilles, Prime Infra director for environmental, social and governance, said that the government can create more laws and regulations to help in achieving sustainability.

"The government has a lot of policy setting to do to encourage people to be really, really mindful of their carbon footprint," he said.

"The impact of us as consumers is higher than the impact or carbon footprint of corporations," Mr. Devilles added, referring to how corporations have a way to control their process enabling them to control their footprint.

Abigail Ho-Torres, Maynilad assistant vice-president and head of customer experience, said one of the problems is that the Philippines is still largely a "sachet economy" because there's still a "premium" to be socially responsible.

"[If the] government can facilitate easier disposal and recycling of the waste then that would be helpful also because SMEs (small- and medium-sized enterprises) cannot [afford] having sustainable packaging even if they wanted to make their practices more sustainable," Ms. Torres said.

"Even if it were not a straight-up incentive, just have a network that will support [SMEs]," she added.

"[The government] really just have to understand it and be able to link everything that they do to sustainability. And understand that climate change is real and all of their decisions and laws [...] will have an impact not just on themselves, their family but also in their constituents," Ms. Cabal-Revilla said. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**