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7-Eleven store count up by 161 in the first half

PHILIPPINE Seven Corp., the operator of 7-Eleven convenience stores, reported that it completed 161 new stores in the first semester, surpassing half of its target 300-store network expansion in 2022.

By the end of the first half, the number of 7-Eleven stores reached 3,241 — 1,057 in Metro Manila, 1,402 in Luzon (outside Metro Manila), 464 in the Visayas, and 318 in Mindanao.

"Shopping close to home will be the trend that will persist," Philippine Seven's President and Chief Executive Officer Jose Victor P. Paterno said at the Philippine Stock Exchange STAR Investor Day on Thursday, "the smaller the store, the closer to home, the better."

Mr. Paterno said that stores in the Visayas-Mindanao region had been expanding faster and would continue to do so.

The company also reported that as of July 31, the number of its 7-Bank automated teller machines (ATMs) rose to 1,854 or 946 machines short of its target in 2022.

These cash recycler ATMs allow 7-Eleven store operators to deposit the money they get from store sales that the machine "recycles" to fund the withdrawals of its customers.

"[This] reduces cash handling risks and allows immediate usage of funds," the company said.

In the second quarter, Philippine Seven reported an attributable net income of P691.28 million, reversing the P103.24-million net loss last year.

Its systemwide sales registered a growth of 49.8% to P16.62 billion in the second quarter from P11.1 billion a year ago.

Year to date, the company's net income was up to P890.41 million, turning around from last year's net loss of P402.9 million, while systemwide sales climbed by 35.9% to P30.18 billion from P22.2 billion last year.

On the stock market on Friday, Philippine Seven shares declined by 3.31% or P2.50 to P73 apiece. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Mondelez posts growth, cites economic reopening, spending

FOOD manufacturer Mondelez Philippines, Inc. has posted growth on the back of more sales and on the opening up of the Philippine economy.

Aleli H. Arcilla, Mondelez Philippines vice president and managing director, said on the sidelines of a media briefing in Quezon City last week that the company has benefited from increasing consumption.

"We're actually seeing some growth already. There is a lot of pick-up from our products. We are recovering from last year. The business has rebounded from last year and we are seeing that it is following the market growth," Ms. Arcilla said.

"As we experience the opening up of the economy, there is more consumption, more influx of income as many Filipinos are becoming employed. We are seeing consumption go up," she added.

Further, Ms. Arcilla mentioned that the sales of some of the company's products have already reached pre-pandemic figures due to stronger demand.

"In some of the categories or the products that we have, they have already reached pre-pandemic levels, we're hitting pre-pandemic levels already. These products include beverages like Tang and our biscuits since it is back to school," Ms. Arcilla said.

Moving forward, Ms. Arcilla mentioned that Mondelez Philippines is planning to introduce new products that will bolster its current offerings. She declined to give details on the upcoming products.

"We will be coming up with new products that we will be introducing either on the premium side or on the mainstream side. We will be working on it in the coming months," Ms. Arcilla said.

The company also disclosed that its items are not as affected by the current tight supply and soaring prices of sugar in the country.

"For Mondelez, we're not as affected as the other beverage companies and even the other fast-moving consumer goods [that] use a lot of sugar and are dependent on imports. We are less impacted by the sugar shortage right now," Ms. Arcilla said.

"The products that require sugar are manufactured outside of the Philippines. The sugar shortage does not necessarily impact us because we have the supply for our products based in other plants in other countries. We get our products as finished goods already," she added.

Some of the brands sold by Mondelez Philippines include Tang drink mix, Cadbury chocolate, Chips Ahoy cookies, Cheez Whiz bread spread, and Toblerone chocolate. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Petron targets to spend up to P15B annually in next 3 years

PETRON Corp. is targeting to spend up to P15 billion annually for the expansion of its operations until 2025, a company official said last week.

"The company is programming to spend between P10 [billion and] P15 billion on [an] annual basis for the next three years," said Albertito S. Sarte, vice president and deputy chief finance officer of Petron, during a virtual press briefing last week.

He said that the amount will be spent in the Philippines and Malaysia, with a sharing of 70% and 30%, respectively.

"A good bulk of this will be allocated for the service station expansion in both countries because we see that as our growth strategy, to be able to sell more and reach more customers in the future," he added.

Petron, the country's largest oil refining company, has a refining capacity of 268,000 barrels per day, producing a full range of fuels and petrochemicals.

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It operates about 40 terminals in the region and has around 2,800 service stations where it retails gasoline and diesel, the company previously said.

"We are planning to add more stations but probably at a more cautious tone," Mr. Sarte said.

Mr. Sarte also said that the company is looking to expand its logistical capabilities and expanding its storage facilities for both countries.

Meanwhile, Erich Y. Pe Lim, manager and investor relations officer at Petron, said that the company is also targeting to further reduce its carbon footprint by 2025.

"We have actually been able to reduce our carbon emissions by 3% in 2021. We are looking at reducing it further to 12% by 2025," he said.

Mr. Pe Lim said that Petron was able to reduce its carbon emissions through various initiatives such as reconfigurations, improving its operations in the refinery, and replacing of thermal power plants with steam generating facilities. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**