

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

5,987.72

▲ 204.57 PTS.

▲ 3.53%

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2022

BusinessWorld

PSEI MEMBER STOCKS

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| AC Ayala Corp. P645.00 +P29.00 +4.71% | ACEN ACEN Corp. P5.80 +P0.28 +5.07% | AEV Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P55.80 +P3.80 +7.31% | AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P8.50 +P0.54 +6.78% | ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P24.05 +P1.05 +4.57% | AP Aboitiz Power Corp. P32.45 +P2.15 +7.10% | BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P113.00 +P1.60 +1.44% | BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P91.90 -P0.10 -0.11% | CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P13.04 -P0.28 -2.10% | EMI Emperador, Inc. P19.96 +P0.72 +3.74% |
| GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P2,150.00 +P152.00 +7.61% | GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P410.00 -P6.00 -1.44% | ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P165.00 +P2.20 +1.35% | JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P240.00 +P5.80 +2.48% | JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P43.90 +P2.70 +6.55% | LTG LT Group, Inc. P8.45 +P0.19 +2.30% | MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P50.40 +P2.00 +4.13% | MEG Megaworld Corp. P2.07 +P0.02 +0.98% | MER Manila Electric Co. P290.20 +P13.00 +4.69% | MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P12.42 +P0.42 +3.50% |
| MPI Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P3.43 +P0.13 +3.94% | PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P27.30 -P0.40 -1.44% | RLC Robinsons Land Corp. P16.52 +P0.72 +4.56% | SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P40.00 +P1.25 +3.23% | SM SM Investments Corp. P794.00 +P34.00 +4.47% | SMC San Miguel Corp. P96.65 -P0.15 -0.15% | SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P32.00 +P1.40 +4.58% | TEL PLDT, Inc. P1,528.00 +P38.00 +2.55% | URC Universal Robina Corp. P116.00 +P4.90 +4.41% | WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P27.20 -P1.70 -5.88% |

USAID, partner aim to help boost PHL cybersecurity

By Arjay L. Balinbin
Senior Reporter

THE United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and global cybersecurity company Palo Alto Networks recently signed a partnership deal to help the Philippines strengthen its cybersecurity posture.

The alliance is expected to boost e-commerce and other digital services in the country by increasing customer confidence, Palo Alto Networks officials said during a briefing in Mandaluyong City on Tuesday.

USAID and Palo Alto Networks hope to achieve the goal by increasing customer confidence through awareness and promotion of safe computing practices,

as well as the adoption of international standards.

“Governments are modernizing their networks to take advantage of digital innovations and improve the way they communicate with citizens,” said Oscar Vi-saya, Palo Alto Networks country manager for the Philippines.

“As they modernize their IT infrastructure, their cybersecurity must keep pace with these developments,” he added.

The company said that it will work with USAID to develop programs and activities and provide technical assistance and expert advisory to help realize the vision.

They envision an efficient, robust, and secure digital ecosystem to support the country’s digital transformation.

They hope to speed up the adoption and implementation

of a “zero trust framework,” an approach to cybersecurity that helps “secure an organization by eliminating implicit trust and continuously validating every stage of digital interaction,” Palo Alto Networks said.

Government data showed 37% of online users in the country reported cyberattacks in 2020.

At least 73% of consumer data from micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises were lost to attackers, greater than the 56% figure in the Asia-Pacific region.

According to cybersecurity firm Sophos, the Philippines placed third in worldwide ransomware payments in 2021, with local organizations paying an average of \$1.6 million, doubling the country’s average of \$820,000 in 2020.

“The MoU (memorandum of understanding) that was signed, a lot of it focuses on capacity development side and individual levels, so we’ve heard about some of the training programs with Palo Alto, cybersafety programs, and professional development ... and there are good practice frameworks and standards that we are also working with our partners,” said John Garrity, chief of party of USAID’s Better Access and Connectivity project.

“There are ways to come together to address these challenges through a multistakeholder approach from capacity building for organizations and individuals,” he added.

Mary Rose E. Magsaysay, deputy executive director at the Cybercrime Investigation and Coordinating Center, noted that the costs of cybersecurity capac-

ity development are generally “unreachable.”

At the same time, she confirmed that foreign crime syndicates are responsible for the recent text scams.

She added that text scams have cost victims in the Philippines “millions of dollars.”

The government and the country’s telecommunications companies need more smishing and phishing alerts, she noted.

Meanwhile, the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) announced on Tuesday that the Philippines was recently re-elected to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Council in Bucharest, Romania.

It said 193 member states of the ITU selected 48 states to lead the council.

“The Philippines is among the 13 states selected from Region E (Asia and Australia), along with Australia, Bahrain, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, and the United Arab Emirates,” the DICT said in a statement.

“The country commits to work towards the fulfillment of the ITU’s mandate to make the digital future inclusive and more accessible for everyone, especially in developing countries,” it added.

The department also said that it is expected to lead the country’s involvement in discussions and decision-making that will “significantly affect” the member states’ digital agenda.

“The department also enjoins the support and collaboration of government agencies to achieve its goals as a council member,” it noted.

JFC adds more Tim Ho Wan stores in China, eyes 100

JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. (JFC) said on Tuesday that it recently debuted two Tim Ho Wan restaurants in Beijing, bringing to 11 its current store count in mainland China ahead of its target of 100 new openings.

“As the second largest city in the country in terms of urban population, Beijing is instrumental in our aim to further expand our business in China,” JFC President and Chief Executive Officer Ernesto Tanmantiong said in a press release.

The two Michelin-starred stores, which opened in August, are the 10th and 11th branches of Tim Ho Wan on China’s mainland, another step forward for the company’s overseas expansion and sustained growth in the region.

“The long queues and waiting lists that have welcomed our openings in Beijing give us greater confidence to continue with our global expansion strategy for the Jollibee Group and Tim Ho Wan,” Mr. Tanmantiong said.



THE Jollibee Group opened two new Tim Ho Wan stores in CapitaMall Taiyanggong and APM Mall, Beijing, China.

JFC believes that the two new stores are in prime locations: CapitaMall Taiyanggong Mall branch in Chaoyang District, which can seat 108 people, and APM Mall branch along Wangfujing Street, which can seat 100 people.

It said Chaoyang District is the “main urban area of the Chinese capital” while Wangfujing Street is “a well-known shopping street that is also known as one of the city’s symbols of commerce.”

JFC said that both branches were packed on opening day, with more customers lining up for up to an hour to try

Tim Ho Wan’s signature dishes, which include baked barbecue pork buns, rice rolls, and pan-fried radish cake.

“Jollibee Group is committed to open 100 Tim Ho Wan restaurants in China within the next few years,” the company said.

In September 2020, JFC opened its first Tim Ho Wan restaurant in Shanghai’s Jing’an District after it entered into a joint venture agreement with the Tim Ho Wan Group to open and operate Tim Ho Wan restaurants in China.

“We remain focused [on] expanding Jollibee Group’s presence in China because of the continued trust and support that the locals have shown our brands. Residents and even tourists of Beijing can expect to see more of our stores in the coming years,” JFC China and Yonghe King President Louie Liu said.

JFC plans to increase its store network in China, which now numbers 475 across the brands Tim Ho Wan, Yonghe King, and Hong Zhuang Yuan by the end of August.

Last week, JFC’s subsidiary — Jollibee Worldwide Pte. Ltd. — committed more funds to the private equity fund that owns the Tim Ho Wan brand and company-owned stores ahead of a planned expansion in China.

It committed additional capital to Titan Dining LP, which increased its fund size to (Singapore) \$350 million from S\$250 million.

On the stock market on Thursday, JFC shares added P5.80 or 2.48% to P240 apiece. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

MR.D.I.Y. marks opening of 11 stores in October

HOME improvement retailer MR.D.I.Y. has scaled up its operations in the Philippines with the opening of 11 new stores, expanding its local network to 284 branches.

In a statement on Monday, the retailer said it is opening stores in Liloan, Southern Leyte; Gubat, Sorsogon; A. Bonifacio St., Brgy. Canlalay, Biñan, Laguna; City of Batac, Ilocos Norte; Carigara, Leyte; and Tabuk City, Kalinga.

The other stores are in malls, namely: NCCC Buhangin in Davao; NCCC Victoria Plaza in Davao; Primark Cabiao in Nueva Ecija; Unimart Capitol Commons in Pasig; and Waltermart Talavera in Nueva Ecija.

MR.D.I.Y. has over 2,000 stores across Asia located in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Brunei, Cambodia, India, and the Philippines. In Europe, it has stores in Turkey and Spain.

“All MR.D.I.Y. stores are managed directly and the company often works in collaboration with other mass merchandise retailers or owners of malls or shopfront properties,” the firm said.

Its stores offer a selection of around 18,000 stock-keeping units across five major categories, namely: hardware; household and furnishing; electrical; stationery and sports equipment products; and other items such as toys, car accessories, jewelry, and cosmetics.

The company said that it “strives to put customers first by operating an innovative business that is flexible when it comes to providing a wide variety of products, good quality, and value-for-money, holding true to the company’s motto of ‘Always Low Prices.’”

MR.D.I.Y. will be offering promos and prizes from Oct. 14 to 16 for its customers who are looking for “affordable and value for money items perfect for a variety of needs and for do-it-yourself projects.”

With its Lucky Shoppers’ promo, which will run from Oct. 15 to 16, the first 100 customers with a minimum single receipt purchase of P1,000 will win a mystery prize and a rainbow umbrella. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

PHL SMEs see e-commerce ‘vital’ to growth over next 3 years, says FedEx research

EXPRESS transportation company FedEx Express, a subsidiary of FedEx Corp., said the Philippines is among the “most optimistic” in Asia-Pacific, Middle East, and Africa (AMEA) regarding e-commerce, with both small and medium businesses and consumers anticipating future growth.

The company said 91% of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the Philippines expect e-commerce to “continue to boom” and become more vital to their business growth over the next three years.

“SMEs in India, Malaysia, Philippines, and Vietnam were among the most optimistic about their future e-commerce growth in the next three years,” FedEx Express said in an e-mailed statement, citing a study it commissioned.

The company noted that e-commerce currently represents less than 6% of total retail sales in each of these markets. This means that maintain-

ing customer service quality is crucial as more people join the on-demand economy and shipping volumes rise.

The commissioned research showed a 10% gap between how SMEs rate their e-commerce customer experience and how consumers view it.

The company said the biggest gaps were in having an efficient returns service (13%) and access to customer support (11%).

“Deliveries taking too long is the number one pain consumer point (53%) followed by handling returns (42%),” the company noted, adding that consumers typically expect delivery within three days to one week.

“There is a desire for delivery to be at least more reliable if not faster.”

SMEs in the Philippines, the company also said, will need to step up their game significantly to meet consumer expectations. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

NEA set to supervise Albay power utility in transition

THE National Electrification Administration (NEA) is set to exercise its supervisory power over the operation of Albay Electric Cooperative, Inc. (Aleco), which distributes power in the Bicol province.

In a media release on Monday, NEA said that the move was prompted by the decision of the cooperative’s member-consumer-owners to terminate the concession agreement between Aleco and SMC Global Power Holdings, Inc., which owns Albay Power and Energy Corp. (APEC).

NEA said the operations of the power distributor are set to revert to Aleco from APEC in the first quarter of next year based on the electric cooperative’s board resolution, which “unanimously invoked the default provision under Section 21.1.1” of the concession agreement.

The agency said Aleco invoked the supervisory power of NEA under the law to start the required preparations to assist in the transition “until it becomes financially and technically viable to manage its operations.”

It also said Aleco will not take over the usual operations “until the exhaustion of the period as required by the said

clause which should not be later than Feb. 25, 2023.”

According to NEA, APEC has not satisfied the requirements and deliverables under the concession agreement.

It said that based on an audit conducted in March 2021, there were deficiencies in the performance of APEC as a concessionaire of Aleco. The audit showed that the system loss stayed above the system-loss cap set by the Energy Regulatory Commission, NEA said, resulting in “huge subsidized costs thereby negatively affecting its financial viability.”

“Also, the collection efficiency remained well below the standard set by NEA and the audit further reveals that with the financial status of APEC, it showed no sufficient cash to pay its maturing obligations,” the agency added.

Sought for comment, San Miguel Corp. President and Chief Executive Officer Ramon S. Ang told reporters on Monday that he would let NEA take over the power distribution in Albay. SMC Global Power is the listed conglomerate’s power generation arm. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**