

More phishing attacks expected during holidays

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INTERNET security company Kaspersky expects more phishing attacks in the Philippines and its neighbors in Southeast Asia in the upcoming holidays, a company official said.

“Based on our recent report on phishing attacks as a whole, from January to June 2022 (12 million) the attacks exceeded Southeast Asia’s total number last year (11 million),” Jesmond Chang, Kaspersky head of corporate communications for Asia-Pacific, told *BusinessWorld* in an e-mail interview on Tuesday.

In its report, Kaspersky said the rise in the percentage of phish-

ing detections in the Philippine e-commerce industry puts the country in third place among its Southeast Asian neighbors, next to Malaysia (572.48%) and Indonesia (443.33%).

Among the Philippines’ local bank customers, 8,454 phishing incidents were recorded in the second quarter, up from 4,746 detections in the first quarter, or a

78% increase within the first half of the year.

“The rise in global detections for the same period was only at 28%,” Kaspersky said.

Meanwhile, phishing attacks against payment systems in the Philippines went down by 19%.

“There were 132,125 detected phishing attempts in the first quarter among Kaspersky users in

the payment system sector. Three months later, it trickled down to 105,986 incidents,” the company said.

“Hopefully, with the regulations in place and the people’s awareness, we can encourage them to have more proactive action in fighting against phishing or any cyberattacks,” Mr. Chang said. “We can do more collectively. We see this as

an opportunity for the Philippines to beef up its collective efforts to achieve cyber-resiliency.”

He added that cross-border coordination, public-private partnerships, building trust partnerships, bridging the cybersecurity skills gap, capacity building, and education, among others, are “so crucial at this point if we want to advance the country’s cybersecurity readiness.”

Midrange vivo Y22s now available in the country

THE vivo Y22s, the company’s latest midrange smartphone, is now available in the Philippines.

vivo Philippines on Tuesday announced that the latest addition to its Y series lineup retails at P12,999 for the 8+128GB variant, and at P10,999 for the 4+128GB model. A 4+128GB variant is also exclusively available via Lazada from Oct. 25 to Nov. 5.

The vivo Y22s will be available in all vivo stores nationwide starting Nov. 5 in two colors: Summer Cyan and Starlit Blue.

The phone is powered by a Qualcomm Snapdragon 680 processor with 6-nanometer platform technology for “uninterrupted and lag-free usage,” with reduced power consumption and improved gaming performance.

Its 6.55-inch HD+ Display also has a 90Hz refresh rate for clearer and crisper images.

The vivo Y22s has a 5,000mAh battery, and the company said the phone offers a standby time of about two days on a single full charge. It is also equipped with 18-watt FastCharge technology.

The smartphone has a rear camera setup of a 50-megapixel (MP) HD main camera and a 2MP macro lens.

“The 50MP HD main camera alone utilizes a large sensor that gathers light like a professional camera for high-definition pictures. vivo Y22s’ main camera can perfectly work at night and in a low light setting, allowing its users to capture crisp images by using multi-frame denoising capability,” vivo Philippines said.

“The 2MP Macro camera complements the vivo Y22s’ superb set of cameras as it allows users to take shots as close as 4cm to unveil the beauty of even the tiniest detail.”

Meanwhile, the Y22s is also equipped with an 8MP Front Camera with AI Face Beauty and Bokeh Selfie features, as well as a Super Night Selfie camera feature that uses noise reduction technology and a selfie softlight band.

Both cameras also offer nine different portrait styles with varied settings, such as vintage, retro and high fashion.

Like other Y series models, the Y22s has Multi-turbo 5.5 and Ultra Game mode features that filters out alerts and incoming messages while playing games and also offers picture-in-picture gaming mode. — **BVR**

Xiaomi launches entry-level phone Redmi A1 in PHL

XIAOMI is launching its new entry-level phone, the Redmi A1, in the Philippines this month, which will be available at a discounted price for a limited time.

The Redmi A1 will be available for just P3,999, down from its regular price of P4,499, from Oct. 29 to Nov. 13 at Xiaomi authorized stores and resellers nationwide.

After the promo period, the company will give Bluetooth speaker freebies to buyers of the phone until supplies last.

“Power-packed with a quality camera, a huge battery, a large display, and a powerful chipset, the Redmi A1 is not short on specs,”



Xiaomi said in a statement.

The dual-sim Redmi A1 comes with a 6.52-inch full screen display and is available in three color

options: Black, Light Green and Light Blue.

The phone has an AI dual camera at the rear with an 8-megapixel (MP) main lens and a 5MP front camera.

It is powered by a MediaTek Helio A22 processor and has 3GB of RAM and 64GB ROM, which can be expanded up to 256GB with a MicroSD card.

The Redmi A1 has a 5,000 mAh battery and comes with a 10-watt fast charger.

“On a full charge, the Redmi A1 can last up to 30 call hours, 22 hours of video playback, and 161 hours of music,” Xiaomi said. — **BVR**

Google agrees to compliance reforms to prevent search warrant data loss

WASHINGTON—The US Justice department said on Tuesday it had reached an agreement with Alphabet, Inc.’s Google resolving a dispute with the search engine giant over the loss of data responsive to a 2016 search warrant.

The government said it was a “first-of-its-kind resolution” that would result in Google reforming “its legal process compliance program to ensure timely and complete responses to legal process such as subpoenas and search warrants.”

“The department is committed to ensuring that electronic communications providers comply with court orders to protect

and facilitate criminal investigations,” said Assistant Attorney General Kenneth Polite, who heads the Justice department’s Criminal Division.

The settlement demonstrated the department’s “resolve in ensuring that technology companies, such as Google, provide prompt and complete responses to legal process to ensure public safety and bring offenders to justice,” he added.

Google said it had a “long track record of protecting our users’ privacy, including pushing back against overbroad government demands for user data, and this agreement in no way changes

our ability or our commitment to continue doing so.”

The company told a US court it had spent over \$90 million “on additional resources, systems, and staffing to implement legal process compliance program improvements.”

The Justice department said an independent compliance professional will be hired to serve as an outside third party related to Google’s compliance upgrades.

In 2016, the United States obtained a search warrant in California for data held at Google related to the investigation of the criminal cryptocurrency exchange BTC-e, the department said.

Later, the US Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit ruled search warrants issued under the Stored Communications Act (SCA) did not cover data stored outside of the United States.

In 2018, Congress clarified the SCA did cover US providers that chose to store data overseas but the government said “in the intervening time, data responsive to the warrant was lost,” the Justice department said.

Google will assemble reports and updates regarding the compliance program that will go to the government, the Google Compliance Steering Committee and Alphabet board committees. — **Reuters**

US, Japan, S. Korea warn of ‘unparalleled’ response if North Korea holds nuclear test

TOKYO — The United States, Japan and South Korea warned on Wednesday that an “unparalleled” scale of response would be warranted if North Korea conducts a seventh nuclear bomb test.

Washington and its allies believe North Korea could be about to resume nuclear bomb testing for the first time since 2017.

“We agreed that an unparalleled scale of response would be necessary if North Korea pushes ahead with a seventh nuclear test,” South Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyun-dong told a news conference in Tokyo.

Mr. Cho was speaking alongside his Japanese and US counterparts, Vice Foreign Minister Takeo Mori and Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman.

“We urge (North Korea) to refrain from further provocations,” Ms. Sherman

said, calling them “reckless and deeply destabilizing for the region.”

“Anything that happens here, such as a North Korean nuclear test... has implications for the security of the entire world,” she said, sending a thinly veiled message to Pyongyang’s supporters, China and Russia, in the UN Security Council.

“We hope indeed that everyone on the Security Council would understand that any use of a nuclear weapon will change the world in incredible ways.”

For the first time since North Korea began testing nuclear weapons in 2006, China and Russia this year vetoed a US-led push for additional Security Council sanctions.

North Korea has been carrying out weapons tests at an unprecedented pace this year, firing more than two dozen ballistic missiles, including one that flew over Japan.

Angered by South Korea’s military activities, Pyongyang last week fired hundreds of artillery shells off its coasts in what it called a grave warning to its neighbor to the south.

In September, the *USS Ronald Reagan* and accompanying ships conducted joint military exercises with South Korean forces in response to a North Korean ballistic missile test in what was their first joint military training involving a US aircraft carrier since 2017.

In response, the United States, South Korea and Japan have committed to deepening cooperation, Mr. Mori said.

“We agreed to further strengthen deterrence and response capability of the Japan-US alliance and the US-South Korea alliance, and to promote further security cooperation among the three countries,” Mr. Mori said. — **Reuters**

ASEAN chair alarmed over escalating Myanmar violence

THE ASSOCIATION of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is gravely concerned about an escalation of violence in Myanmar and is calling for restraint and an immediate cessation of fighting, the bloc’s chair Cambodia said.

Myanmar has been trapped in a cycle of violence since the army ousted Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi’s elected government in February 2021, detaining her and thousands of activists and launching a brutal crackdown that has given rise to armed resistance movements.

Recent weeks have seen some of the bloodiest incidents, with dozens killed.

In a statement, the ASEAN chair cited the bombing of Myanmar’s largest prison, conflict in Karen State and an air strike in Kachin State on Sunday, which is reported to have killed at least 50 people.

“We are deeply saddened by the growing casualties, and the immense suffering that ordinary people in Myanmar have endured,” said the statement.

The conflict was not only exacerbating the humanitarian situation but was also undermining efforts to implement a peace “consensus” agreed between ASEAN and the junta last year, said the statement.

“We, therefore, strongly urge utmost restraint and immediate cessation to violence,” said the statement, which called for all parties to pursue dialogue.

ASEAN is leading diplomatic efforts to bring peace to Myanmar but the junta has done little to implement the “consensus,” which committed to an immediate halt to violence and the start of dialogue towards a peace agreement.

ASEAN foreign ministers are due to meet on Thursday to discuss the crisis, Cambodia said on Sunday.

A group of 457 Myanmar civil society organizations have called in an open letter for ASEAN leaders to scrap the peace plan it agreed with the military and instead work with civilian leaders and a shadow government. — **Reuters**

Global COVID-19 cases may rise in coming months — report

DAILY GLOBAL COVID-19 infections are projected to rise slowly to about 18.7 million by February from the current 16.7 million average daily cases, driven by the northern hemisphere’s winter months, the University of Washington said in an analysis.

Far fewer infections are expected than last winter’s estimated peak daily average of about 80 million cases in January of 2022 that was driven by the rapid spread of the Omicron variant, according to the report.

The increase in cases is not expected to cause a surge in deaths, the University of Washington’s Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) said.

It forecast that global daily deaths would average 2,748 people on Feb. 1, compared with around 1,660 currently. In January, deaths were more than 11 million per day globally.

IHME estimates that daily infections in the United States will increase by a third to more than a million, driven by students back in schools and cold weather-related indoor gatherings.

A surge in Germany has peaked already, it said in its report on Oct. 24. IHME expects cases there will fall by more than a third to around 190,000 by February.

The report suggests that the recent COVID surge in Germany might be due to Omicron



PEOPLE wear face masks at Shinagawa station during the rush hour in Tokyo, Japan, April 20, 2020.

subvariants BQ.1 or BQ.1.1, and will likely spread to other parts of Europe in the coming weeks.

A rapid increase in hospital admissions in Germany — the highest since the COVID outbreak in 2020 — remains an area of concern, it said.

IHME’s analysis also found that the new Omicron subvariant XBB, which is currently driving

a surge in hospitalizations in Singapore, is more transmissible but less severe.

The global impact of XBB is expected to be muted by the fact that people who were previously infected with the BA.5 subvariant of Omicron likely have immunity against it, the report said. — **Reuters**

Sunak gathers Cabinet to begin ‘hard work’ of fixing economy

LONDON — British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak will gather his newly appointed cabinet for the first time on Wednesday, a day after taking power with a promise to fix the mistakes of his predecessor and stabilize the economy.

At the top of Mr. Sunak’s agenda will be preparation for a fiscal statement, keenly anticipated by financial markets, which is scheduled for Oct. 31 but which the *Times* newspaper reported could be pushed back by a few days.

Asked about the timing of the statement, expected to set out how the government will plug a budget shortfall of as much as 40 billion pounds (\$45.88 billion), foreign minister James Cleverly told Sky News he did not have a “specific confirmation” of the date.

“(Sunak), of course, will want to take some time to work on the detail on that,” Mr. Cleverly said. “We know it needs to come soon. We know people want certainty. We know people want a clearer idea of the government’s plans.”

Mr. Sunak, who replaced Liz Truss as leader after her brief stint as prime minister was engulfed in chaos, on Tuesday chose to not bring in a new finance minister but did appoint a cabinet with a mix of views from across the Conservative Party’s political factions.

His decision-making immediately came in for criticism from the opposition Labour Party, which focused on the reinstating of lawmaker Suella Braverman as interior minister less than a week after she was sacked by Ms. Truss for a security breach.

As Britain’s third prime minister this year, Mr. Sunak faces a daunting list of problems beyond the economic crisis, including how to unite and rebuild a fractured party whose reputation has been shredded by months of scandals and rows.

“The hard work begins now and together, the prime minister’s new cabinet will deliver for the British people,” a source in his Number 10 Downing Street office said in a statement. — **Reuters**