

United Airlines readies direct Manila-San Francisco flights

UNITED Airlines will be flying a daily service from Manila to San Francisco starting Oct. 30 east-bound, the US carrier said on Wednesday.

Although still subject to government approval, the new flight will be United Airlines' first trans-Pacific service from Manila since it started its Manila operation in 1982.

"We are excited to launch the new nonstop service from Manila to San Francisco to meet strong requests from our customers on both sides of the Pacific," said Wally Dias, regional director of sales for Greater China, Korea, and Southeast Asia.

"We have more than 40 years of a long and rich history in the Manila market and the launch of our first trans-Pacific service truly shows our continued strong commitment to the Philippine market," he added.

Mr. Dias said the new nonstop flight will not only give customers from Manila daily service to San Francisco but also open more than 70 destinations in the mainland



US, Canada, and Latin America through the airline's San Francisco hub.

San Francisco International Airport is United Airlines' largest airport on the US west coast, which also serves as a gateway to Asia-Pacific.

The airline operates more than 200 daily departures from the San Francisco airport to more than 100 destinations around the globe.

The newly launched flights between Manila and San Francisco are among the Asia-Pacific direct flights the airline will offer this coming winter, which are flights to Auckland and Christchurch in New Zealand; Brisbane, Melbourne, and Sydney in Australia;

Haneda, Narita, and Osaka in Japan; Seoul in South Korea; as well as Papeete, Singapore, Shanghai, Hong Kong, and Taipei.

Before the newly launched service, the airline has been operating nonstop service to Guam and Palau from Manila.

Meanwhile, the country's flag carrier Philippine Airlines (PAL) said on Wednesday that it "welcomes additional competition" on the routes, calling it "a sign of the strength and vitality of the air travel market between the Philippines and the United States."

"PAL has always embraced healthy competition among different players across our network," it said in a statement.

PAL said it operates 37 weekly flights on US routes, including double daily flights to Los Angeles, daily flights each to San Francisco and Guam, and several weekly flights to New York and Honolulu.

The Civil Aviation Board (CAB) also welcomed the entry of United Airlines.

"We are also excited to welcome more American travelers as the present administration opens more avenues for foreign investment and tourism," CAB said in a statement, adding that the US is home to millions of Filipinos and a "vital partner" in nation-building.

"Once the additional route is operated, travelers will have more options, which is very timely since we are riding a wave of increasing demand post-pandemic. While we all know that airline operations are extremely complex and especially at the birthing of a new route, we are hoping for the success of this route, and stand ready to provide the appropriate regulatory atmosphere," it added.

— **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

PLDT gets NTC nod for two cable landing stations

PLDT Inc. said on Wednesday that it received provisional authority from the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) to construct two new cable stations.

The two new stations in Baler, Aurora, and Digos, Davao del Sur will host the Apricot cable system, an intra-Asia submarine cable that faces the Pacific side of the Philippines.

They will give telecommunication companies alternate routes that do not traverse the usual West Philippine Sea waters, PLDT said in a press release.

"The Apricot cable system's route ensures a significantly higher degree of resilience. When our Baler and Davao cable landing stations are completed, PLDT will have alternate sites facing the Pacific, making it easier to hook up

to data offices in the US," said PLDT President and Chief Executive Officer Alfredo S. Panlilio in a statement.

The new cable landing facilities and the Apricot cable system are expected to be completed by 2025 and will connect the Philippines to Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, Taiwan, and Guam.

The cable system will further augment PLDT's international capacity and raise it to more than 140 terabytes per second once fully equipped.

It is also expected to help PLDT in delivering higher speeds and lower latency in and out of the Philippines, and add resiliency to its existing landing stations in Batangas, La Union, and Daet in Camarines Norte.

"As we help position the Philippines as the new hyperscaler destination and major transit hub in Asia, we continue to upgrade and build on the foundations of PLDT's global network infrastructure," said Mr. Panlilio.

"These investments enable us to provide superior digital services to our consumer and enterprise customers, deliver newer technologies with our 4G, and 5G capabilities, and add value for attracting hyperscalers and investors to expand their cloud in the country," he added.

As of the end of the first quarter, PLDT's fiber footprint reached 231,000 kilometers of international fiber and over 874,000 kilometers of domestic fiber, the company said.

— **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

NAIA,
from S1/1

"Government revenue is important but more important is quality of services, the improvement of the facilities, the experience of travelers," he said when asked to detail the revenue-sharing model under the approved solicited proposal. "We're trying to push tourism as a driver of growth. We need those improvements now... This solicited approach is even faster."

'DE FACTO CLOSED'

At the same time, Mr. Balisacan said the Manila International Airport Consortium's (MIAC) P267-billion unsolicited proposal to operate and modernize the NAIA is "de facto closed."

But the consortium — composed of Aboitiz InfraCapital, AC Infrastructure, Asia's Emerging Dragon Corp., Alliance Global-InfraCorp Development, Filinvest Development Corp., JG Summit Infrastructure Holdings Corp., and Global Infrastructure Partners — is encouraged to participate in the bidding.

In a statement, the MIAC said it supported the government's move to rehabilitate the NAIA.

"Regardless of the route, we firmly believe that NAIA's modernization requires a long-term and comprehensive solution delivered by a credible and capable party at the quickest possible time. These criteria — regardless of



PHILIPPINE STAR/MIGUEL DE GUZMAN

THE MARCOS administration wants to invite bids for the modernization of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Pasay City.

the approach — would best benefit NAIA and the Filipino people," the consortium said.

Terry L. Ridon, convenor of InfraWatch, said the approved NAIA PPP project "constitutes a very significant cost difference" to MIAC's P267-billion unsolicited proposal, which has a cost premium of around 57%.

"The approval of the DoTr's P170.6-billion NAIA rehabilitation proposal constitutes an acceptable middle ground between MIAC's unsolicited proposal and the original DoTr proposal amount of P141 billion," he said in a Facebook Messenger chat.

"This balances the government interest to expedite the rehabilitation of the country's flagship airport through private sector capital and the public interest of reasonable airport fees during the concession period," he added.

Mr. Ridon said MIAC may opt to participate in the solicited bid "if it continues to believe that it can provide the project's best vision, service and pricing at NEDA's approved project cost."

OTHER PROJECTS

Meanwhile, the NEDA Board approved the P12.75-billion unsolicited proposal for the operation and maintenance of the Laguindingan International Airport project, and the P748-billion Samar Pacific Coastal Road II project.

Mr. Balisacan said the Laguindingan Airport PPP project "aims to integrate concepts of 'green' and 'connected' airports into its design and operation and use digital technologies to enhance the passenger experience."

The Samar project would involve the construction of two marine bridges — the Laoang 2 Bridge and Calomotan Bridge — and improve existing roads between Laoang Island and mainland Samar Island.

In a statement, Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno said the approval of the three infrastructure projects signals the Marcos administration's PPP push, especially in transportation.

"Private sector participation, which brings in both financial capital and technical expertise, will enable consumers to experience efficient and quality service as they travel domestically and internationally," he said.

ADB,
from S1/1

"Asia and the Pacific continue to recover from the pandemic at a steady pace. Domestic demand and services activity are driving growth, while many economies are also benefiting from a strong recovery in tourism. However, industrial activity and exports remain weak, and the outlook for global growth and demand next year has worsened," ADB Chief Economist Albert Park said in a statement.

The ADB noted that interest rates in the United States and other advanced economies are "likely to shape regional growth."

"If inflation is tamed more quickly than currently expected in the advanced economies, the authorities there will likely adopt a more dovish monetary policy,

which would support growth in the region," it said.

On the other hand, the regional growth outlook may face challenges arising from elevated financial stability risks, uncertainty over Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and the El Niño weather pattern.

"Any escalation (in Ukraine) could renew energy and food security challenges and rekindle inflation," the ADB added.

For Southeast Asia, the ADB trimmed the 2023 growth forecast to 4.6% from 4.7% in April. It also slightly lowered the 2024 outlook to 4.9%, from 5% in April.

"Weaker global demand for manufactured exports has slowed growth even as domestic demand remained intact. Private

consumption continued to be the primary driver of economic growth in the first half of 2023, buoyed by improved labor market conditions and income across Southeast Asia," it said.

The recovery in the tourism sector and China's economic rebound would support Southeast Asia's growth.

The ADB expects inflation in developing Asia to slow to 3.6% this year from its previous forecast of 4.2%, with inflation seen to further decelerate to 3.4% next year.

The multilateral lender also slightly lowered its inflation forecast for Southeast Asia. Inflation is now projected to ease to 4.3% this year from its previous forecast of 4.4%, and to further

slow to 3.2% in 2024 from 3.3% previously.

However, the ADB noted that core inflation remained elevated in East and Southeast Asian economies.

"With lower inflation in developing Asia and more moderate monetary tightening in the United States, most central banks in the region have kept policy rates steady this year, with signs emerging of a shift toward easier money," the ADB said.

The BSP has paused its tightening cycle in June, keeping its policy rate unchanged at 6.25% for two straight meetings. Since May 2023, the BSP raised borrowing costs by 425 bps to tame inflation. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocsos**

INTER-AGENCY ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION COMMITTEE (IAEECC)

RESOLUTION NO. 8, s. 2023

ENCOURAGING ALL GOVERNMENT ENTITIES (GES) TO INSTALL AND UTILIZE SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC (PV) SYSTEM OR ANY EQUIVALENT RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGY IN THEIR GOVERNMENT-OWNED FACILITIES AND/OR OFFICE BUILDINGS IN A FORM OF SELF-GENERATING FACILITY, DISTRIBUTED ENERGY RESOURCES (DER), OR NET METERING AGREEMENT WITH HOST DISTRIBUTION UTILITY (DU)

WHEREAS, Republic Act (RA) No. 11285 or the Energy Efficiency and Conservation (EEC) Act, institutionalizes energy efficiency and conservation as a national way of life, enhances the efficient use of energy, and grants incentives to energy efficiency and conservation programs and projects;

WHEREAS, Section 5 of the EEC Act states that the Department of Energy (DOE) shall take the lead in the implementation of the law, and shall be responsible for the planning, formulation, development, implementation, enforcement, and monitoring of energy management policies and other related energy efficiency and conservation plans and programs;

WHEREAS, Section 2.b of the EEC Act declares that it is the policy of the State to promote and encourage the development and utilization of efficient renewable energy technologies and systems to ensure the optimal use and sustainability of the country's energy resources;

WHEREAS, RA No. 9513 or the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 affirms the policy of the state to accelerate the exploration and development of renewable energy to achieve energy self-reliance, through the adoption of sustainable energy development strategies to reduce the country's dependence on fossil fuels, and thereby minimize the country's exposure to price fluctuations in the international markets, which affect almost all sectors of the economy;

WHEREAS, the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 introduced the Net-metering for Renewable Energy (RE) Program to encourage electricity end-users to participate in the generation of electricity from RE sources to meet their monthly electricity requirements, and at the same time, promote the efficient and cost-effective applications of RE in the country;

WHEREAS, the Net-metering Program as defined under the Renewable Energy Act of 2008 refers to a system, appropriate for distributed generation, in which a distribution grid user has a two-way connection to the grid and is only charged for its net electricity consumption and is credited for any overall contribution to the electricity grid;

WHEREAS, DOE Department Circular No. DC2019-10-0013 or the Omnibus Guidelines Governing the Award and Administration of RE Contracts and the Registration of RE Developers outlines the checklist of requirements for the registration of RE project for own-use and/or non-commercial operation;

WHEREAS, the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) Resolution No. 11, s. 2022 provided for the rules governing the utilization of Distributed Energy Resources (DER);

WHEREAS, Section 4 of the IAEECC Resolution No. 5, s. 2022 or the Government Energy Management Program (GEMP) Guidelines requires that all government entities (GEs) shall formulate, prepare and update annually their agency's EEC Program that is focused on energy conservation measures, target energy efficiency cost reductions and other EEC strategies that are geared towards the efficient utilization of every available resources, and promote the development and utilization of new and alternative energy efficient technologies such as RE technologies;

WHEREAS, Section 13 of the GEMP Guidelines encourages all government entities to reduce their electricity consumption by at least ten percent (10%); and

WHEREAS, Section 4 of DOE Department Order No. DO2020-01-0001 provides that the IAEECC shall act as a collegial body, and approval of its actions may be made by a simple majority.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, AS IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the members of the IAEECC:

RESOLVED, that as part of the compliance with the GEMP, the GEs are encouraged to have an assessment on the installation and utilization of a Solar PV System or any RE equivalent technology in their government-owned facilities and/or office buildings within three (3) years after the approval of this Resolution: **Provided, That**, the Solar PV System or any equivalent RE technology to be installed shall initially supply at least twenty percent (20%) of the GE's electricity requirement based on the highest monthly kilowatt-hour (kWh) billing demand of the previous year;

RESOLVED, that the GE that shall install a Solar PV System or any equivalent RE technology with a capacity not exceeding one hundred kilowatts (100 kW) in their government-owned facilities and/or office buildings shall be allowed to be a Qualified End-User (QE) and may enter into a Net-metering agreement with its Distribution Utility (DU): **Provided, That**, GEs and DUs who enter into a net-metering agreement must abide with the DOE policies and ERC resolutions and other related issuances, rules, and regulations on net-metering;

RESOLVED, that pursuant to ERC Resolution No. 16, s. 2014, any GE that shall be allowed to be a QE that installs an on-site RE-generating facility, such as a photovoltaic system, and enters into a net-metering agreement with its DU shall secure a Certificate of Compliance (COC) for such RE-generating facility: **Provided, That**, on behalf of the QE, the concerned DU shall submit to the ERC all documentary requirements relative to the QE's COC application;

RESOLVED, that any GE that shall install a Solar PV System or any equivalent RE technology with a capacity of above 100 kW for its own-use and will not export energy to the distribution system shall secure a COC from the ERC, as provided under ERC Resolution No. 11, s. 2022, and a Certificate of Registration from the DOE for own-use and/or non-commercial purposes;

RESOLVED, that the DOE-EUMB shall provide the official list of Solar PV installers for reference and guidance of all GEs;

RESOLVED, that the DOE-EUMB shall assist any GE that intends to install a Solar PV System in its office buildings and/or facilities relative to the technical requirements necessary in the installation of the said Solar PV System (e.g., estimation of Solar PV capacity based on GE's demand, suitable location for Solar PV System and components, etc.);

RESOLVED, that the DOE shall issue a corresponding issuance to all DUs to provide a special lane for net metering applications of all GEs relative to their installation of Solar PV or any equivalent RE technology in their offices/buildings/facilities;

RESOLVED, that the DOE, in collaboration with Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) shall assist any GE in evaluating the structural integrity of its office buildings and/or facilities for the installation of the said Solar PV System;

RESOLVED, that any EEC Project utilizing a new and alternative energy efficient technology such as a Solar PV System or any equivalent technology, which any GE may undertake, shall be legitimately considered as Government Energy Efficiency Project (GEEP): **Provided, That**, the GE shall include such GEEP into its approved Energy Efficiency and Conservation Plan (EECP): **Provided, further**, That the GE shall observe and comply with the provisions set forth under the GEMP Guidelines;

RESOLVED, that the DOE shall monitor the adherence/compliance of those concerned to this Resolution and provide updates on the same to the IAEECC;

RESOLVED FURTHERMORE, that this Resolution be approved and disseminated to all GEs for adoption and implementation; and

RESOLVED FINALLY, that this Resolution shall take effect upon publication in the Official Gazette or any newspaper of general circulation. A copy of this Resolution shall be filed with the University of the Philippines Law Center – Office of the National Administrative Register.

ADOPTED, in Energy Center, Rizal Drive cor. 34th St., Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City, Metro Manila.

RAFAEL P.M. LOTILLA
Secretary, Department of Energy
and Chairperson, IAEECC

IAEECC MEMBERS:

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