

## China suspends youth jobless data after record high readings

CHINA has suspended publication of its youth jobless data, saying it needed to review the methodology behind the closely watched benchmark, which has hit record highs in one of many warning signs for the world's second-largest economy.

The decision announced shortly after the release of weaker-than-expected factory and retail sales data sparked rare backlash on social media amid growing frustration about employment prospects in the country.

It also marks the latest move by Chinese authorities to restrict access to key data and information, a trend that is unnerving overseas investors.

Fu Linghui, a spokesman for the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), said the release of data would be suspended while authorities look to "optimize" collection methods.

"In recent years, the number of university students has continued to expand," Mr. Fu said. "The main responsibility of current students is studying. Society has different

views on whether students looking for jobs before graduation should be included in labor force surveys and statistics."

This issue, as well as the definition of the age range currently set at 16-24, "needs further research," Mr. Fu said.

In recent months, China has restricted foreign users' access to some corporate registries and academic journals, and cracked down on due diligence firms operating in the country, a vital source of information on China for overseas businesses.

"The declining availability of macro data may further weaken global investors' confidence in China," said Ting Lu, chief China economist at Nomura, adding that youth unemployment was expected to have risen in July.

At the height of its COVID-19 outbreak late last year, China abruptly changed the way it classified deaths from the disease, a move that fueled criticism abroad and at home. — **Reuters**

# Supreme Court affirms seafarer disability ruling

THE Supreme Court has affirmed a Court of Appeals ruling that found a seafarer to be entitled to permanent disability benefits after he suffered a hand and shoulder injury while on duty.

In a resolution dated Jan. 23 and made public on Aug. 10, the tribunal concurred with the appellate court's decision to uphold the findings of company-designated physicians, who had concluded that Dennis R. Villamor's carpal-tunnel syndrome and rotator cuff tendinopathy entitled him disability benefits.

It said the doctors' findings were deemed final after the seafarer had been unable to work following the 120-day period required under law.

Under the Labor Code, a disability is total and permanent

if the employee is unable to perform any "gainful" occupation for a continuous period exceeding 120 days.

Only doctors chosen by employers may determine if a worker has sustained a permanent disability while on duty.

The seafarer's employers, Transocean Shipmanagement (Philippines), Inc. and Companhia Portuguesa de Navagacao International SA., had offered to pay \$9,000 for the shoulder injury, arguing that his hand injury was not work related, citing the opinion of third-party doctor.

Mr. Villamor's hand injury had been diagnosed as a Grade 10 disability, which under Philippine Overseas Employment Adminis-

tration's rules entitles the worker to \$10,075 in compensation.

The shoulder on the other hand was classified as a Grade 11 injury, making the seafarer eligible for \$7,465 in compensation, subject to the legal interest rate of 6%.

"The opinions of the company-designated and the independent physicians are rendered irrelevant because the seafarer is already conclusively presumed to be suffering from a permanent and total disability" the tribunal said.

"It must be consistently reiterated that the law governing the entitlement of a seafarer to disability benefits consists of an interplay between the Labor Code (and) the Amended Rules on Employee Compensation," the court said. — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**

### OPINION

## Attracting the best job candidates

**Are companies still using pre-employment tests like psychological and IQ tests in their hiring process? What could be the possible issues if we don't use written tests? I'm asking because testing takes so much time, especially when we have to hire large numbers of workers. Is there a better way? — Blue Jay.**

What you're doing creates a cycle of boom and bust in your hiring process. The question is — how serious is it? When you take those written tests out of the equation, what assurance do you have that those you are hiring will perform to management's satisfaction?

Would you be happy taking the calculated risks of removing the written test to fast-track the hiring process? You should be, because testing applicants is only one of several tools to determine their ability, aptitude, and personality and predict their future work performance.

The most common tests are designed to measure a variety of areas ranging

from verbal reasoning, numerical ability, problem-solving, mechanical ability, finger dexterity (in the case of typing or assembly work) and spatial agility, or the ability to understand visual relationships between objects and space.

If we're on the same page on this, then you must understand that many of these tests, whether traditional paper and pencil tests, or their online versions, are from the Western context and may not be universally applicable to us in Asia, unless you can find some models designed by local but reputable psychologists or psychometricians.

Just the same, if you think these tests are delaying the process, then, go hire people without the tests. It's worth the risk to some human resource (HR) professionals. After all, there are many ways to check the worthiness of applicants. They include competency-based job interviews or assessment centers.

Much will depend on the kind of positions that you're trying to fill.

At any rate, there are many control points for predicting the future of ap-

plicants in your organization. Even after hiring, you can still see how they perform in actual job situations as probationary employees. You would be surprised to know that some multinationals do not hesitate to hire applicants and put them in regular employment status right away. Why is this happening?

Because they also hate delays in hiring. They're confident they have a robust performance management system that makes it easy to discover deadwood and other problem workers. They've also perfected their policies and procedures, which makes it easy to remove employees without violating the law.

#### SELECTION PROCESS

Not every HR person realizes that recruitment is delicate and difficult. That's why we keep reading sad stories of HR people who are ghosted during job interviews. Even with the help of social media, it has become tough for HR to attract talent suited for the organizational culture. But that's not all. The difficulty also lies in choosing the best candidate among several candidates.

This happens in the absence of an objective system that involves asking the same

set of interview questions to all applicants. It is essential that all interviewers from the HR department and the requisitioning department be equipped with the same parameters before making a hiring decision.

If not, you may be spending time, money and effort unnecessarily. Anticipate the level of waste generated by a bad hire.

It is best then to pursue various options, including any of the following:

**One, organize a job fair for your organization.** While it's more economical to join other government-sponsored job fairs, it's best to create your own platform to control the message you wish to convey about the advantages of joining your organization.

Allow applicants to see what working for your company is like. Consider offering free meals and beverages, host parlor games and offer raffle prizes to the first 150 visitors for the day.

**Two, improve your employer branding.** This may include understanding how your current workers perceive your management style, which may not be limited to pay and perks. You may find that applicants came away with negative views of your company simply

from the experience of not having their interviewer around when they show up, or having the interviewer arrive late.

The best approach is to be proactive in knowing the company's online reputation.

In conclusion, you have to simplify the recruitment process. For example, there's no need to ask for an application letter from applicants; a biodata or CV will suffice. You can also ditch application forms. Send only the top two candidates on the short list further along the hiring process.

If it takes time to hire new employees, investigate the necessity of all the steps you've been taking in selecting new employees. Consider this a form of "Lean HR" — the application of kaizen and lean principles in the personnel management function.

### IN THE WORKPLACE REY ELBO

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## PAL expands tie-up with Emirates to include Cebu, Clark

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES (PAL) has expanded its interline agreement with the Middle East's airline Emirates to enable the latter's access to the flag carrier's network via Clark and Cebu hubs.

With the expansion, passengers of Emirates will be able to access domestic points in Philippine Airlines' network via Mactan-Cebu International Airport and Clark International Airport.

"This partnership expansion will provide seamless connectivity for passengers to reach even more destinations in the Philippines using a single ticket and a convenient baggage policy," the local carrier said in a press release.

Through the Cebu hub, Emirates' passengers can be connected to Bacolod, Butuan, Cagayan de Oro, Davao, Iloilo, Caticlan, and Puerto Galera, while they can also make use of Philippine Airlines' network to Cebu, Caticlan, and Busuanga via Clark airport.

Meanwhile, Philippine Airlines' passengers can also fly via Dubai In-



ternational Airport to connect seamlessly to Emirates' network to cities in Europe, Africa, and other parts of the Middle East.

These Emirates-operated flights include routes to Amman, Birmingham, Cape Town, Dammam, Dublin, Lisbon, Manchester, Muscat, and Riyadh.

In March, the two airlines announced the signing of an interline agreement to share networks via Dubai and Manila, which Emirates Chief Commercial Officer Adnan Kazim said was to be expanded to include additional points.

"The expansion comes months after Philippine Airlines and Emirates first announced their interline agreement, reaffirming the commitment of both airlines to serve growing demand by providing travelers with more choice and flexibility, as well as enhanced customer experiences," said Philippine Airlines.

Philippine Airlines operates 24 weekly flights to three countries in the Middle East as well as nonstop services to the east and west coasts of Canada and the US, while Emirates operates 25 weekly flights to Manila, Cebu, and Clark.

Emirates has 29 codeshare and 110 interline partners, which allows it to increase its connectivity and offer more convenient options to its passengers. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

## CTA denies Manulife Data Services' claim of P99-M excess VAT

THE COURT of Tax Appeals (CTA) has denied Manulife Data Services, Inc.'s refund claim worth P98.84 million representing its excess value-added tax (VAT) payments for the fiscal year of 2017.

In a 13-page decision dated Aug. 10, the tribunal said it did not have jurisdiction over the case since the firm failed to appeal the commissioner of internal revenue's (CIR) denial of its claim on time.

"Upon its receipt, petitioner (Manulife Data Services) could have simply and immediately furnished the CIR's letter to its counsel informing it that its refund/tax credit claim has been denied," Associate Justice Lanee S. Cui-Devid said in the ruling.

Under the Tax Code, taxpayers have 30 days to dispute the CIR's denial of a refund claim before the CTA, upon receipt of the decision.

Manulife Data Services argued that the internal revenue commissioner's denial letter was invalid since it was addressed directly to the firm instead of an authorized representative. — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**

### FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code  
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## Century Properties says results hit or beat pre-pandemic levels

CENTURY PROPERTIES Group, Inc. said on Thursday that financial results have returned to pre-pandemic levels, allowing the real estate developer to pursue growth opportunities.

"Our financial and operating results for the first half of the year are comparable if not better than the pre-pandemic levels which puts us in a very good position to pursue opportunities in this growing and robust segment of the industry through organic growth, acquisitions or consolidation," said Century Properties Treasurer and Chief Finance Officer Ponciano S. Carreon in a media release.

In a regulatory filing, the company said second-quarter attributable net in-

come reached P219.23 million, up 25.5% from P174.75 million a year earlier.

Gross revenues for the three months ending in June, hit P3.77 billion, higher by 39.6% than P2.7 billion previously.

In the first half of the year, it reported P656 million in net income, 20% higher than the P548 million in the same period last year, driven by higher revenues.

It reported a 27% increase in its top line to P6.7 billion from P5.3 billion due to higher sales from its first-home residential brand PHirst.

The company's PHirst brand contributed 52% to first semester revenues or P3.5 billion, 48% higher than the P2.6 billion reported the previous year.

"The demand for quality and strategically located first homes have proven

to be resilient and even stronger and [Century Properties] was well-prepared to serve this market with its First-Home Brand," said Century Properties President and Chief Executive Officer Marco R. Antonio.

The company added that the rest of the revenues, at P2.4 billion, came from its in-city vertical developments commercial leasing, and property management segments at P670 million and P217 million, respectively.

"We are aiming to maintain this growth trajectory as we launch new projects," Mr. Antonio added.

For the second half of the year, the company said it is planning to launch two more projects, which include the brand's foray into the Visayas region.

During the first half, it launched its development project PHirst Park Homes Gapan in Nueva Ecija and opened PHirst Impressions Batulao in Nasugbu, Batangas.

"We are taking a very calculated stance in managing our leasing portfolio and high-rise vertical residential developments aligned with our view of a moderate and gradual growth for this segment of the industry," the company said.

The properties would bring Century Properties' active projects to 20, "on its way to achieving the programmed nationwide presence," it said.

On Thursday, Century Properties closed unchanged at P0.34 per share. — **Adrian H. Halili**

### JOB VACANCIES

- |                                              |                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| 2 - Foreign Customer Service Team Leader     | 10 - Foreign Operations Specialist                    |
| 5 - Foreign Java and Python Developer        | 5 - Foreign Application Developer                     |
| 1 - Foreign Back Office Team Leader          | 10 - Bilingual product development specialist         |
| 5 - Foreign Quality Assurance Officer        | 5 - Bilingual Web and Software Developer              |
| 2 - Foreign Marketing Operations Team Leader | 10 - Bilingual SQA Officer                            |
| 5 - Bilingual Sales and Marketing Officer    | 5 - Bilingual Systems Analyst                         |
| 2 - Foreign UI Designer                      | 2 - Foreign Visual Graphic Designer                   |
| 10 - Bilingual Customer Service Specialist   | 5 - Bilingual IT Support                              |
| 5 - Foreign Social Media Marketing Officer   | 10 - Foreign Audit and Risk Control Specialist        |
| 5 - Bilingual Data Analyst                   | 5 - Bilingual Market Research and Development Officer |
| 1 - Admin Officer                            | 1 - Business Development Officer                      |
| 1 - Foreign Chief Operations Officer         | 2 - Foreign Executive Assistant                       |
| 5 - Multilingual Marketing Specialist        | 10 - Multilingual Customer Service Specialist         |
| 5 - Multilingual Audit and Risk Specialist   | 2 - Multilingual Back Office Team Leader              |
| 2 - Bilingual HR Officer                     | 1 - Multilingual Customer Service Team Leader         |

**QUALIFICATIONS:**  
Master's College Degree in any field  
\* Knowledge in computer operations  
\* Knowledge in corporate accounting and writing in Mandarin, Bilingual and foreign  
\* Willingness to be assigned to any related position  
\* Flexible hours availability for shift work and overtime  
\* Well paid and well-ventured compensation skills

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