

## Aboitiz Data Innovation eyes to expand offerings of AI solutions

ABOITIZ Data Innovation (ADI) targets to increase its offerings of artificial intelligence (AI)-powered solutions across Asia, its top official said last week.

The Singapore-based startup company has a presence in Hong Kong, Malaysia, Thailand, and Azerbaijan, together with its collaboration with the Aboitiz Group in the Philippines.

"Our effective focus and growth are in Asia, establishing the Philippines as our base of operations in creating formulation of how to make it work and bringing that... to markets that we operate in — commercial service, industrial, and the public sector as well," ADI Chief Executive Officer David R. Haroon told *BusinessWorld* at the sidelines of a briefing.

ADI wants to become the "go-to partner" for AI solutions in the Philippines in 10 years, Mr. Haroon said, and "truly believes" local firms are ready to adopt new technologies.

According to the Work Trend Index 2024 of Microsoft Corp. and LinkedIn Corp., 86% of knowledge workers in the Philippines use generative AI at work, also higher than the 83% regional and 75% global average.

"It's the willingness. Maybe they're not sure in terms of

what's the value and the return of investment. Sometimes, it's a lack of will because it just seems very challenging and they're not sure how do we begin," Mr. Haroon said.

ADI aims to achieve its 10-year goal through identifying companies' business challenges and using data science and AI solutions, he said.

"The solution is a combination of technology, business know-how, and operational process deployment," he said.

He cited one of the use cases implemented in its partnership with Republic Cement & Building Materials, Inc., which aims to reduce waste in cement creation.

ADI Head of Public Sector Carlos Streegan said they also helped develop the Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) AI-powered inflation forecasting, which helps policy makers decide whether to give subsidies to certain sectors.

DBM now uses a data management system as well, he added.

Meanwhile, ADI also collaborated with UnionBank of the Philippines, Inc. on AI solutions for credit scoring and risk management, Mr. Streegan said. — **A.R.A. Inosante**

# Dell rolls out new commercial laptops, workstations in PHL

DELL TECHNOLOGIES has launched its latest artificial intelligence (AI)-supported commercial laptops, workstations, and wireless headset in the Philippines, with the products targeted to boost employee productivity amid the rise of hybrid work.

"I think we all know how AI has changed the way we work, the way we even play games, the way our lives are going through day after day. And we think it's just starting. That's the reason why we're very bullish. We're making huge investments in the AI space," Dell Technologies Philippines, Inc. (Dell Philippines) Country General Manager Ronnie Latinazo said at a briefing on Tuesday.

"We know that the hybrid workforce is going to just increase more and more. Companies are trying to figure out how they want to manage and set up their workforce. We're here to help companies prepare for the future of the modern workplace. So, we're making a big bet on AI," he added.

Dell Philippines launched the Latitude 7350 Detachable, a laptop which features an 8-megapixel HDR camera. It is

now available at a starting price of P165,000.

The new Latitude portfolio also include updates across the 5000, 7000, and 9000 series devices, including the Latitude 7350/7450 Ultralights. The Latitude 7450 is has a starting price of P92,500.

Also launched were the new mobile and fixed Precision workstations.

In particular, the Precision 5490 features the combined AI-engine central processing unit (CPU), integrated Intel Arc graphics processing unit (GPU), and a low-power AI engine neural processing unit (NPU) with Intel AI Boost and Intel vPro options. The laptop has a 16:10 display with up to QHD+, 100% standard RGB (red, green, blue) colorspace, 500 nits brightness, and PremierColor.

Precision 5490 mobile workstations are available starting at P245,000.

The new PCs are equipped with NPUs equipped with an AI acceleration engine that can take on more dedicated AI tasks, taking the load off of the CPU and the GPU.

The NPU offloads capabilities like auto framing, background blur and eye-tracking through the Intel Core Ultra processors, providing up to 38% more battery life.

Users can also create generative AI (GenAI) images over five times faster with Stable Diffusion, a text-to-image model.

Dell is also working with CrowdStrike and Intel to offload security functions onto the device via the NPU, improving threat detection.

Meanwhile, the PCs also feature improved uptime via the ProSupport Suite, as Dell's SupportAssist technology can use telemetry and AI to fix PC issues without human intervention.

"This lets IT activate Dell-authored scripts to autonomously correct blue screen errors, thermal issues, and more across their entire fleet of PCs," the company said.

Dell Philippines has also made ProSupport Suite for PCs with self-healing capabilities and Digital Employee Experience Services for GenAI available in the Philippines.

The company is also looking to make AI-supported PCs available for the consumer segment, it said.

"Consumer devices are also extremely personal devices. But at the end of the day, they are all productivity devices. And this is a technology that helps you make your device more productive," Dell Technologies South Asia and Emerging Markets Client Solutions Group Senior Director and General Manager Rakesh Mandal told reporters at the event.

He added that the company is also looking at integrating GenAI into its future products.

Meanwhile, Dell Philippines also launched five new headsets equipped with AI-driven noise canceling technology.

"The Dell Premier Wireless ANC Headset (WL7024) features AI-based noise-canceling microphones that distinguishes human speech signals from background noises from both the user and their audience and adjusts the level of noise cancellation based on the user's environment," it said.

The sensor can perform tasks like mute or unmute, and pause or play, as long as either earcup is lifted. The headset also has touch controls. — **Aaron Michael C. Sy**

## Younger Filipinos ride the wave of buy now, pay later for increased financial flexibility

By Weihan Sun

THE Philippine peso recently closed at P58 to \$1, marking its worst close since November 2022. Headline inflation also increased to 3.9% in May, with housing, utility, and transport mainly contributing to the hike.

Despite these recent developments, I believe that there are still reasons to be optimistic after a year beset by various economic and finan-

### OPINION

cial challenges. The World Bank has projected the Philippines to be among the fastest-growing economies in the region on the back of the acceleration of private consumption. Results from our TransUnion Philippines Q1 2024 Consumer Pulse Survey conducted on Feb. 6-14 also show that Filipinos are becoming financially savvy. This is amid the increased usage of financial technology (fintech) services and a more proactive attitude towards financial literacy and responsible credit management.

TransUnion's Q1 2024 Consumer Pulse Survey involved 977 Filipino consumers aged 18 years and older. Generations are defined as follows: Gen Z, 18-26 years old; Millennials, 27-42 years old; Gen X, 43-58 years old; and Baby Boomers, ages 59 and above.

### THE RISING TIDE OF BUY NOW, PAY LATER

Between 2021 and 2023, the fintech landscape in the Philippines grew over 38%, going from 216 companies to 299, each offering various financial services. This indicates a growing demand for industry players who seek to make fi-

nanial processes easier, increasingly digital, faster, and more secure.

One of the more noticeable areas that has seen growth in usage is buy now, pay later (BNPL). Defined as an alternative credit-enabled payment method that allows consumers to immediately finance purchases and pay them back in fixed installments over a relatively short period of time, the results from our Q1 2024 survey show that reported BNPL service usage in the past

twelve months grew to 42% in the period from 39% a year prior.

Awareness of BNPL services is high among the younger generations, as 81% of Gen Z and 86% of Millennials said they've heard of such offerings. Among those who've heard of BNPL, 65% of Gen Z and 68% of Millennials reported using BNPL services at least once in the past 12 months.

### FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code or by typing the link [tinyurl.com/8ut6a3yr](https://tinyurl.com/8ut6a3yr)

Weihan Sun is the principal of Research and Consulting for Asia Pacific at TransUnion.

## World Bank cuts growth forecast for Myanmar to 1%

ECONOMIC growth in conflict-torn Myanmar will be around 1% for the 2024-2025 fiscal year, the World Bank said on Wednesday, as escalating violence, labor shortages and a depreciating currency make it harder to do business.

In December, the World Bank had projected Myanmar's economy would grow by around 2% during the period, after estimated gross domestic product growth of 1% in the fiscal year that ended in March 2024.

"The downward revision in projected growth for FY2024/25 is largely due to the persistence of high inflation and constraints on access to labor, foreign exchange, and electricity, all of which are likely to have larger impacts on activity than was previously expected," the World Bank said in a report.

The Southeast Asian country of about 55 million people has been in political and economic turmoil since a 2021 coup when the military ousted an elected civilian govern-

ment, ending a decade of tentative democratic and economic reform.

Faced with a widening armed resistance against its rule, Myanmar's junta earlier this year announced a conscription plan to replenish its depleted military manpower.

"The announcement of mandated conscription in February 2024 has intensified migration to rural areas and abroad, leading to increased reports of labor shortages in some industries," the World Bank said.

The junta has also lost access to some key land borders with China and Thailand, leading to a sharp drop in overland trade.

"Excluding natural gas, exports through land borders declined by 44 percent," the World Bank said. "Imports via land borders declined by half, accounting for 71 percent of the decline in overall imports."

Overall, merchandise exports fell by 13% and imports dropped by 20% in the six months to March 2024, compared to the same period a year earlier, according to the World Bank. — **Reuters**

## Elon Musk withdraws lawsuit against OpenAI

BILLIONAIRE entrepreneur Elon Musk on Tuesday moved to dismiss his lawsuit accusing ChatGPT maker OpenAI and its Chief Executive Officer Sam Altman of abandoning the startup's original mission of developing artificial intelligence (AI) for the benefit of humanity and not for profit.

Attorneys for Mr. Musk asked the California state court to dismiss the lawsuit, originally filed in February, without giving a reason for the move, according to a filing in San Francisco Superior Court.

A Superior Court judge there was prepared to hear OpenAI's bid to dismiss the lawsuit at a hearing scheduled for Wednesday.

OpenAI and an attorney for Mr. Musk did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Mr. Musk dismissed his case without prejudice, which means he could refile it at another time.

The lawsuit marked a culmination of Mr. Musk's long-simmering opposition to OpenAI, a startup he co-founded and that has since become the face of generative AI through billions of dollars in funding from Microsoft.

Mr. Musk last July founded his own artificial intelligence startup, xAI, which raised \$6

billion in series B funding in May to reach a post-money valuation of \$24 billion.

The lawsuit said Mr. Altman and OpenAI co-founder Greg Brockman approached Mr. Musk to make an open source, non-profit company, but the startup established in 2015 is now focused on making money.

OpenAI "set the founding agreement aflame" last year when it released its most powerful language model GPT-4, the lawsuit said.

Mr. Musk in the lawsuit asked a judge to force OpenAI to make its research and technology available to the public and to prevent the startup from using its assets, including GPT-4, for the financial benefit of Microsoft and others.

OpenAI had argued in a court filing that the lawsuit was based on incoherent claims, describing it as a contrived attempt by Mr. Musk to advance his own AI interests.

"Seeing the remarkable technological advances OpenAI has achieved, Musk now wants that success for himself," OpenAI's attorneys said.

Mr. Musk in a filing in April said OpenAI was trying to "advance arguments that are based on disputed facts" that are beyond the scope of the lawsuit. — **Reuters**

GET A CHANCE TO WIN AN

# iPhone 15

JUST DOWNLOAD & REGISTER FOR FREE!



HBnB

Download the APP Now!





SCAN TO DOWNLOAD

Draw date: July 1, 2024

## 10 UNITS WILL BE GIVEN AWAY!

Per DTI Fair Trade Permit No. FTEB-194138, Series of 2024

Color of iPhones will be subject to availability.