PwC opens office in BGC, plans to hire 2,000 workers

PRICEWATERHOUSECOOPERS (PwC) has invested around P1 billion in an Acceleration Center in Bonifacio Global City (BGC), Taguig.

On Wednesday, PwC inaugurated its 2,500-square-meter Acceleration Center in BGC, which aims to hire 2,000 Filipinos over the next two to three years.

"If you look at this wonderful office, it will give you a hint that this development is probably about close to a billion pesos," PwC Philippines Chairman and Senior Partner Roderick Danao said on the sidelines of the inauguration.

"Not only the facilities, but the technology component that you cannot actually see visibly, is very expensive," Mr. Danao added.

He said that PwC's investment extends beyond the facility to workforce development.

"[Our] investment here is not just the facility. It's a combination of the development of the real estate piece and, of course, the people development, which is more expensive because we are going to hire thousands of people," he said.

The new office will initially focus on high-demand areas such as Guidewire, SAP, and Oracle, aligning with businesses' needs in navigating the evolving technological landscape.

PwC Acceleration Centers Leader Hari Kumar said the firm chose to expand in the Philippines due to the quality of its workforce.

"Generally because of high-quality skills. But the other components that I will add to this are the fact that they (Filipinos) are committed, honest, and they work hard. And most importantly, they are good humans," Mr. Kumar said.

"Building the skills is one part of it, but the human part of it was very significant for us. And that's one of the reasons I'll tell you that the Philippines and Manila have been a huge commitment for us, and we will expand further in the Philippines as well," he added.

The Acceleration Center will focus on jobs in high-end technology and innovation, including artificial intelligence and cybersecurity.

"But we are not expecting everybody to come in with all the talent. But the idea is for us to train and build the skills along with everything," Mr. Kumar said.

PwC Acceleration Center Manila General Manager and Partner Nilesh Sharma highlighted Filipinos' strong customer-centric approach as a key factor in PwC's success in the country.

"Nothing is too hard for them. The resilience they exhibit every single day is why we've been so successful in the last 15 or so years here and 100 years beyond that. And that is the basis and the foundation on which we want to build and pivot into these amazing new areas," he added.

PwC has around 6,400 employees in the Philippines, with 2,900 serving local clients and 3,500 serving global clients. It has offices in Cebu, Iloilo, Davao, and Pasig, as well as a practice firm in Makati City.

The new facility currently serves PwC clients from 26 countries, including the US, Australia, and New Zealand. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

STI says P950-M Alabang campus to open by 2026

TANCO-LED STI Education Services Group, Inc. is expanding its school network with a planned P950-million campus in Alabang, Muntinlupa City, set to be operational in 2026.

The eight-story campus, situated on a 3,266-square-meter property in South Park District, broke ground on Feb. 11, STI said in a regulatory filing on Thursday.

According to STI, the campus will offer senior high school programs and bachelor's degree programs in Information Technology, Business and Management, Hospitality Management, and Tourism Management.

The Alabang campus will accommodate up to 10,000 senior high school and college students. It will feature air-conditioned classrooms with flat-screen TVs, student activity centers with internet connectivity, industry-grade laboratories, and recreational spaces such as a basketball court.

"For years, we have been expanding and improving our facilities to keep up with the demands and challenges of the modern world. This new campus in Alabang reflects our commitment to creating a conducive learning environment that empowers students with relevant skills, knowledge, and character," STI President and Chief Operating Officer Peter K. Fernandez said.

The Alabang campus joins STI's nationwide network of academic centers, which includes locations in Legazpi, Pasay-EDSA, Sta. Mesa, San Jose del Monte, Lipa, Batangas City, Las Piñas, Calamba, Cubao, Lucena, Caloocan, Ortigas-Cainta, Novaliches, Fairview, Naga, and Global City.

For the first quarter of its fiscal year ending June, STI reported a net income of P263.2 million, up from P19.75 million the previous year, as total revenue surged by 60% to P1 billion.

Enrollment reached a record-high 138,060 students for the 2024-2025 school year.

STI shares rose 2.13% or three centavos to P1.44 apiece on Thursday. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Philippine Airlines launches Cebu–Ho Chi Minh flights

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES is expanding its Cebu hub with the launch of new direct flights from Cebu to Ho Chi Minh City (Saigon), Vietnam, the flag carrier said.

In a media release on Thursday, Philippine Airlines, operated by PAL Holdings, Inc., announced that it will begin flights from Cebu to Ho Chi Minh City on May 2.

The soon-to-be-launched Cebu–Ho Chi Minh flights will operate three times a week — every Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday — while the return service to Cebu will depart from Ho Chi Minh City every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday.

"We look forward to boosting tourism, strengthening Cebu's position as the nation's emerging business and leisure gateway, and building on the strong and friendly relations between Vietnam and the Philippines," Philippine Airlines President and Chief Operating Officer Stanley K. Ng said in a media release on Thursday.

Philippine Airlines said the new service will utilize Airbus A321 jetliners, which can accommodate up to 199 passengers and offer both Business Class and Economy Class.

The airline also announced that it is increasing its Manila–Hanoi–Manila service to daily flights as part of its expansion in Vietnam.

At the local bourse on Thursday, shares in PAL Holdings closed unchanged at P4.84 apiece. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

Damosa Land, Thai firm sign deal for P772-M coconut facility

REAL ESTATE developer Damosa Land, Inc. (DLI) has secured a 430-million-Thai-baht (around P771.87 million) investment to establish a coconut milk production facility within the Anflo Industrial Estate (AIE) in Panabo City, Davao del Norte.

Thai Coconut Public Company Ltd. (COCOCO), a global player in coconut products, recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with DLI to build the facility, slated for completion by 2026.

The MoU also covers a 25-year land lease agreement inside AIE.

"This partnership directly aligns with our mission to support local industries and stimulate sustainable economic development," said DLI President Ricardo F. Lagdameo in an e-mail statement.

"By partnering with a global leader like COCOCO, we are creating a valuable supply chain ecosystem that provides income and employment opportunities for the local community while positioning Mindanao as a key player in the international market."

The project is expected to boost COCOCO's capacity to meet growing global demand for coconut milk while creating opportunities for Mindanao's agro-industry.

DLI said COCOCO is also considering applying for special economic zone privileges under the Philippine Economic Zone Authority to receive tax and investment incentives.

The facility is expected to generate employment opportunities during construction and long-term operations. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**