SM Foundation, TESDA partner to support workforce development

SM FOUNDATION, Inc., the corporate social responsibility arm of the SM Group, has partnered with the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) to help enhance Filipino workers' skills and expand access to employment opportunities.

Under the partnership, TESDA learners and graduates will be linked to various career opportunities within the SM Group, covering industries such as construction, food and beverage, hospitality, logistics, and others, SM Foundation said in an e-mail statement over the weekend.

The initiative is aligned with the SM Job Opportunities Building Skills advocacy, which aims to establish industry-responsive training standards and curricula, and implement skills training and enterprise-based education programs.

SM Foundation and TESDA recently signed a memorandum of understanding to formalize the partnership.

"We strongly believe that our continued growth as a business is deeply connected to the development of the people we serve and partner with. That's why this partnership is important to us," SMIC President and Chief Executive Officer Frederic C. DyBuncio said.

"We know it's not always easy, especially in industries where finding qualified talent is a challenge, but it is exactly through collaborations like this that we can help build and strengthen our future workforce," he added.

The agreement will also support job matching efforts through SM job fairs and other employment programs.

"This partnership is for our future, current trainees, employers, and industry leaders. May this endeavor bring us closer to a nation where every Filipino has the skills, tools, and opportunity to succeed," Secretary Jose Francisco "Kiko" B. Benitez, director general of TESDA, said.

SM Foundation said the collaboration builds on its existing efforts to support upskilling and employment facilitation in coordination with other partners.

On May 1, in celebration of Labor Day, SM Supermalls hosted 20 job fairs across its malls nationwide, connecting around 15,000 job seekers with approximately 1,000 employers. The events resulted in over 2,000 individuals being hired on the spot.

Asia Pacific College, an SM-affiliated institution, is also conducting upskilling sessions in partnership with the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines. The programs cover artificial intelligence (AI) fundamentals and business applications, as well as data analytics and AI maturity. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Airlines seen posting stronger Q2 revenues on travel demand

By Ashley Erika O. Jose
Reporter

AIRLINE OPERATORS are expected to record higher revenues in the second quarter amid strong travel demand and higher passenger volumes, analysts said, even as recent first-quarter earnings showed mixed performance across carriers.

"We expect airline companies here to post healthy revenue growth in the second quarter on the back of strong travel demand during the summer," China Bank Capital Corp. Managing Director Juan Paolo E. Colet said in a Viber message.

Mr. Colet said the lower inflation rate and the continued strengthening of the peso against the US dollar are likely to encourage more Filipinos to travel during the dry season and holidays.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said a stronger peso and easing global crude oil prices are expected to lower operating expenses of local and international carriers.

The peso closed at P55.51 versus the greenback on Friday, appreciating by 12 centavos from P55.63 on Thursday, based on data from the Bankers Association of the Philippines.

"There is still potential for tourism to grow further locally amid improvements in infrastructure such as more modernized airports and mass transport systems for the coming year," Mr. Ricafort said.

The government is aiming to privatize at least 15 regional airports by 2026 to support its modernization efforts.

PAL INCOME RISES

PAL Holdings, Inc. reported a 20.28% year-on-year increase in attributable net income to P4.33 billion in the first quarter from P3.6 billion a year earlier, driven by revenue growth.

The parent firm of flag carrier Philippine Airlines (PAL) posted consolidated revenue of P46.95 billion, up by 2.51% from P45.8 billion in the same period last year.

Passenger revenues rose by 0.45% to P40.53 billion from P40.35 billion; cargo revenues increased by 6.25% to P2.04 billion from P1.92 billion; and ancillary revenues grew by 23.93% to P4.35 billion from P3.51 billion. Revenues from other operations declined by 3.8% to P26.33 million from P27.37 million.

Total expenses climbed by 8.24% to P42.29 billion from P39.07 billion in the same period last year.

"We are greatly encouraged by the support of our valued customers who choose to fly on Philippine Airlines' global network, and for whom we are investing in progressive product and service improvements, fleet renewal efforts and digital innovations, with safety and reliability as our topmost concerns," PAL President and Chief Operating Officer Stanley K. Ng said.

PAL carried 4.1 million passengers in the first quarter, up by 5% year on year. Its cargo segment transported 52.6 million kilograms, with over 28,000 flights operated across its international and domestic networks.

The company said higher operating expenses during the period were driven by increased airport charges, third-party contract costs, and depreciation, partially offset by lower fuel expenses.

PAL also said its overall capacity remained steady for the quarter due to ongoing network expansion across both international and local destinations.

CEBU PACIFIC POSTS LOWER INCOME

Cebu Pacific, operated by Cebu Air, Inc., reported an attributable net income of P465.9 million for the first quarter, down by 79.19% from P2.24 billion in the same period last year, due to rising expenses despite double-digit revenue growth.

Total revenue increased by 20.23% to P30.42 billion from P25.3 billion previously.

Passenger revenue rose by 18.68% to P21.16 billion from P17.83 billion; cargo revenues climbed by 35.2% to P1.69 billion from P1.25 billion; while ancillary revenues increased by 21.7% to P7.57 billion from P6.22 billion.

Total expenses surged by 25.6% to P28.46 billion in the first quarter from P22.66 billion a year ago. Flying operations accounted for the largest share of expenses, reaching P10.78 billion, up by 15.42% from P9.34 billion last year, according to the airline's financial statement.

"We remain optimistic on our financial outlook. Underlying demand for affordable air travel remains strong, and we've made earlier strategic investments to ensure resilient operations. Leveraging on these existing assets, CEB remains well positioned for sustainable growth, and improving profitability," Cebu Pacific Chief Financial Officer Mark Julius V. Cezar said.

Repairs and maintenance expenses rose by 66.67% to P5.9 billion from P3.54 billion, the financial statement showed.

Cebu Pacific flew seven million passengers in the first quarter, up by 26% year on year.

As of end-March, the airline operated a fleet of 99 aircraft across 63 destinations and 127 routes, with more than 3,200 weekly flights.

Over the past 12 months, the airline took delivery of 15 aircraft and 13 spare engines to support capacity growth, which it said contributed to higher fleet and financing costs for the period.

HARI honors outstanding CV dealers

Top performers for 2024-2025 raise the benchmark for a future-ready transport network

Biyahenyos all. The Hyundai Truck and Bus dealership network, at the forefront of driving the success of Filipino businesses

Hariphil Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI), the Philippine distributor of Hyundai commercial vehicles (CV), recognized the dealership teams whose exceptional performance in customer service and business development continues to drive industry transformation.

The awards program took place within the first Hyundai Truck and Bus (HTB) National Conference of the year. Bringing together key dealership leaders and executives, the conference mapped out the year's business directions and unveiled to participants HARI's first entries to the electric commercial vehicle (E-CV) market, the Hyundai County Electric and the Mighty Electric, and the locally assembled diesel powerhouse, the HARI Cab.

It also articulated HARI's *Biyahenyo* Program. *Biyahenyo* aims to empower, not only HARI's ever-growing CV customer base but also, and more importantly, the dealerships whose dedication and hard work enable customers to pursue their business goals. Following are the *Biyahenyos* of the HTB network whose 2024-2025 performance embodies HARI's mission of innovation and service excellence.

Sales Awards
- Truck Category: HTB Davao
- Bus category: HTB Alabang
- Best in Sales Management: HTB Alabang

Service Awards
- Best in Warranty Administration: HTB Baliwag
- Best in Service (Advisor): HTB Cabanatuan
- Best in Service (Technician): HTB Cabanatuan
- Best in Overall Workshop Sales Performance: HTB Commonwealth
- Best in Service Management: HTB Alabang
- Best in Call for Service Inspection: HTB Santiago City

Part Awards
- Best in Parts Management: HTB Alabang
- Highest Sales Growth for Parts: HTB Alabang
- Best in Parts Operations: HTB Santiago City

HARI also honored the 2024 Hyundai Global Customer eXperience Championship (CXC) winners. This biennial competition recognizes top Hyundai dealer staff in the Sales and the Service Technician categories for excellence in customer experience.

The HTB Baliwag team topped the CXC Sales Category, while the HTB Cabanatuan team bagged the Service Technician Category. Apart from the trophies, the champions also received generous cash rewards from Hyundai Motor Company.

Arnel Pineda's rousing surprise performance rocked conference participants.

Said HARI Vice-Chairman, President, and CEO Maria Fe Perez-Agudo, "The HARI CV dealership network commits to evolve in order to effectively drive a future-ready transport industry — empowering entrepreneurs, advancing smart mobility, and shaping a sustainable CV market."

Responding to HARI's EVolution road map, William B. Chiongbian II, Dealer Principal of HTB Alabang, said, "It's not just a plan; it's a call to innovate, excel, and redefine what's possible. It urges us to evolve into *Biyahenyos* and *Biyaheroes*, set to embrace an electric future. With HARI and Hyundai Truck and Bus-Korea by our side, the tools are ours to harness for our clients and businesses, delivering exceptional vehicles and unrivaled service."

HARI continues to expand its presence in the EV and next-gen mobility space, reinforcing its commitment to take the lead in future-ready commercial mobility.