

Filipino startup uses AI to cut water leaks



By Edg Adrian A. Eva
Reporter

FILIPINO startup Hiraya Technology Solutions, Inc. is using artificial intelligence (AI) to automate water management and reduce leaks in residential and commercial systems, as local utilities move to improve efficiency and cut waste.

Its flagship product, Hiraya Intelligent Modular Optimization (HIMO), uses AI to monitor and adjust water pressure in real time. The system can detect leaks and automatically lower pressure to minimize water loss, Junior Software Engineer Rhiza Laxamana told *BusinessWorld* in an interview.

“It helps each water district balance pressure, organize data and improve wa-

ter delivery to every household,” she said in Filipino.

The HIMO platform installs sensors and data loggers along the water network to feed live information to pumping stations. Based on this data, the AI system automatically controls valves and pressure levels — functions that many water districts still manage manually.

The setup includes alarm systems for leak alerts and a dashboard for centralized monitoring. Hiraya Tech estimates the system can reduce nonrevenue water — the volume lost to leaks and theft — by about 15% and raise revenue by 10%.

Major utilities are also turning to AI. Maynilad Water Services, Inc., the biggest private water provider in the country, said in January it invested P10 million in leak-detection AI.

Its pilot program identified more than 1,500 leaks across 750 kilometers of pipelines, helping cut nonrevenue water to 36.2% as of the first quarter, down from 66.4% in 2006, according to the company’s website.

Russell I. Diolata, Hiraya head of technical operations, said the HIMO system also improves coordination between pumping stations.

“Sometimes, one station runs out of water while another still has supply. The AI learns from the data and adjusts pressure automatically,” he said.

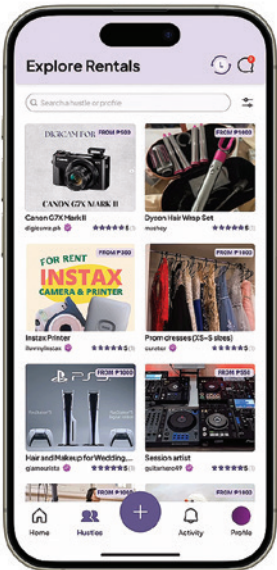
The system has been rolled out in Valencia City in Bukidnon province, Calamba in Laguna and Zamboanga City, with expansion plans in coordination with other local governments, he added.

AI startup links Gen Z to gig work

SERBIZ, an artificial intelligence (AI)-native platform, seeks to help Gen Z and first-time earners find part-time work and earn extra income through AI-powered job matching.

“Side hustling is already part of Filipino life, widely known as *raket* culture,” the company said in a statement. “Many young Filipinos embrace *raket* as a way to earn extra income.”

A 2024 study by consulting firm Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Ltd. found that 45% of Gen Z workers have at least one part-time or side job, ranging from online services and retail work to freelance gigs and small-scale entrepreneurship.



The 2025 Fairwork Philippines Ratings report also estimated that more than 800,000 gig workers in the country are employed through ride-hailing and delivery apps.

Serbiz co-founder and Chief Executive Officer Iyana Marrie C. Argaña said many new gig workers struggle to find jobs that align with their skills and interests.

“Most gig platforms assume users already know what to offer, and that consumers know exactly what to search for,” she said in the statement.

To address this, the company developed two AI agents — Ernie

and Scout. Ernie acts as a “personal hustle coach,” analyzing users’ skills, experience and in-app behavior to recommend side jobs that match their profiles. Scout helps employers by refining vague job descriptions into clear listings that improve worker matching.

“This dual-AI system reduces friction on both sides of the marketplace,” Serbiz said. “It doesn’t just connect people — it builds opportunities and helps users unlock new income streams.”

The most in-demand services on Serbiz include TikTok editing, content creation assistance and event support. The average income of active workers ranges from P800 to P5,000 per week.

Since its launch in January on the Apple App Store and Google Play, Serbiz has attracted more than 80,000 registered users and more than 27,000 organic marketplace posts.

The startup plans to expand across Southeast Asia by 2026 and enhance its AI-driven features. Upcoming updates include integrated payments for faster transactions, skill-building modules to train workers, and global job matching for overseas opportunities. — **Almira Louise S. Martinez**



Small sample, big impact: How talking to just five people can improve startup success

AS CANADA navigates an ongoing tariff dispute with the United States, small businesses and startups are emerging as a source of economic growth that could help Canada assert greater independence from its largest trading partner.

Prime Minister Mark Carney has warned that Canada cannot rely on the US any longer and must instead achieve “economic autonomy.” Ottawa’s efforts to remove internal trade barriers and expand infrastructure projects are central to this objective, paving the foundation to revitalize the Canadian economy.

Another key part of this agenda is fostering entrepreneurship — the engine for new opportunities and economic growth.

Small- and medium-sized enterprises (SME) are the backbone of the Canadian economy. As of

December 2023, small businesses made up 98.1% of all employer businesses in Canada, accounted for 63.7% of the private labor force and 48% of Canada’s GDP (gross domestic product) over the 2017-21 period. They also represented 38.2% of the total value of exported goods.

Although exporting has traditionally been dominated by larger, innovation-intensive SMEs — particularly those with significant intellectual property — recent data shows an increase in exports from smaller, service-oriented firms, many of them immigrant-led. — **The Conversation Via Reuters Connect**

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Nuclear startup to build reactor plant at Manhattan project site

RADIANT Industries, Inc., a California-based nuclear startup, plans to build a factory for its reactors at a site in Tennessee that was once part of the Manhattan Project.

Radiant expects to break ground early next year, and the facility may be producing small reactors by 2028, according to a company statement on Monday.

The land for the new factory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, was used by the US government in the 1940s to enrich uranium that was critical for the original atomic bombs.



“What was formerly the first Manhattan Project site will now be the site of the first portable nuclear generator production,” Doug Bernauer, Radiant’s founder and chief executive of-

ficer, said in the statement. “By 2028, we’ll be rolling out the first factory-built nuclear generator, and within a few years we’ll be producing over a dozen per year.”

Radiant is part of a growing wave of companies developing advanced nuclear designs that can be produced in factories, a strategy aimed at making the technology faster and cheaper.

However, the approach remains unproven in the US, and the company still needs approval from regulators to build its 1-megawatt Kaleidos system.

The company said the Oak Ridge site would be the first in the US to mass-produce small reactors. — **Bloomberg News**

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