

GAC Philippines to launch up to eight new EV models this year

GAC International Philippines plans to introduce up to eight new vehicles this year as it strengthens its direct operations amid rising local demand for electric vehicles (EVs).

"The Philippines is an increasingly important market for GAC Group in Southeast Asia," the company said in a statement on Monday.

"In response to growing demand for intelligent mobility, hybrid, and electric vehicle technologies, GAC Group, through GAC International Philippines, is placing greater strategic emphasis on the Philippine market by further strengthening its local presence, enhancing organizational capabilities, improving operational efficiency, and elevating customer service delivery," it added.

The company said it will introduce a new generation of vehicles, including hybrid and electric models.

"Over the course of 2026, GAC International Philippines plans to launch six to eight new products, progressively expanding its product portfolio in line with market demand," it said.

"These introductions will further strengthen GAC's competitiveness and demonstrate the company's long-term

commitment to investing in the Philippine market," it added.

According to the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines, Inc. (CAMPI) and the Truck Manufacturers Association (TMA), EV sales reached 58,905 units in 2025, representing a 12% market share.

The company also plans to integrate its GAC MOTOR, AION, and HYPTEC products and operations under a unified GAC brand framework.

"Through the ONE GAC strategy, GAC International Philippines will offer Filipino customers a broader and more diverse product portfolio and advanced technology experience, while empowering local dealers and partners with stronger momentum, clearer direction, and enhanced growth opportunities," it said.

The company added that all authorized dealerships will continue operating, maintaining warranty coverage, aftersales services, and parts availability.

"Looking ahead, GAC International Philippines will continue to advance under the ONE GAC Strategy, integrating global resources with localized execution to deliver high-quality, future-ready mobility solutions for the Philippine market," it said.

— **Justine Irish D. Table**

Ford PHL to unveil first mobile showroom in Bataan

FORD PHILIPPINES is set to introduce its first-ever mobile showroom in Balanga City, Bataan.

"The showroom on-the-go is part of Ford's commitment to deepening customer engagement by meeting customers where they are and giving them access to a Ford showroom experience," the company said on Monday.

"It is designed to make it easier for customers in high-traffic and high-growth areas – especially those without a nearby Ford dealership – to explore the latest Ford vehicles, speak with product experts, take a test drive, and avail of exclusive offers," it added.

The mobile showroom's first stop will run from Jan. 26 to Feb. 2, in partnership with Ford Subic.

"This mobile showroom is the first-ever activation of its kind for Ford Philippines – an innovative step forward in how we create curated customer experiences in high-growth

urban areas," said Mark Parulan, marketing director at Ford Philippines.

He said the initiative aims to make it more "convenient for customers to discover our vehicles, engage with our team, and feel confident about choosing Ford."

The showroom, which weighs over 2.5 tons, will be pulled by a Ford Ranger from one location to another.

Customers who reserve Ford vehicles through the mobile showroom will be eligible for P1,000 worth of gift certificates, a P10,000 cash discount, and a full tank of gas, among other perks.

Ford Philippines plans to bring the mobile showroom to additional areas this year, with stops scheduled in Cabanatuan and Dagupan next month.

Last year, Ford Motor Co. Phils., Inc. ranked among the country's top-selling car manufacturers, accounting for 21,784 units sold. — **Justine Irish D. Table**

Spending, from SI/1

A *BusinessWorld* poll of 18 economists last week yielded a 4.2% median estimate for fourth-quarter GDP growth, and 4.8% for 2025.

This also means 2025 could also mark the third year in a row that the government failed to reach its growth goal. The Development Budget Coordination Committee had set a 5.5%-6.5% target for last year.

Nomura and Deutsche Bank's full-year forecasts are also below the Department of Economy, Planning, and Development's 4.8%-5% estimate, but are slightly above the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) 4.6% projection.

"Philippines' Q4 2025 GDP growth is likely to come in at 4.1% YoY (year on year), thus bringing 2025 growth to 4.7%, which outside of the pandemic would be the lowest full-year growth since 2011," Deutsche Bank said. "Similar to Q3, we expect reduced government outlays, with the associated spillover effects to private investment and spending, to drag on growth."

Nomura's Mr. Zhang said the scandal may have continued to hit household consumption and private investments in the last quarter of the year.

"We also expect the negative spillover effects from the scandal to broaden from household consumption to private investment spending, likely due to a prolonged slump in construction activity and the drop in overall business sentiment," he said.

Digital bank, from SI/1

United Kingdom-based financial technology company Revolut could be one of the country's new digital banks, said Angelito "Lito" M. Villanueva, FinTech Alliance.PH chairman and Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. executive vice-president and chief innovation and inclusion officer.

"Well, I think amongst those, I mean, Revolut will be a shoo-in, right?" Mr. Villanueva told *BusinessWorld* on the sidelines of the same event.

"Well, they allowed four slots. (But) it's not like they have to fill all four, right? So, if only three or two are ready, then so be it," he added.

There has yet to be a confirmation of which ones filed their application with the central bank.

In June 2025, the BSP said a Europe-based digital bank had finished its application, while



PHILIPPINE STAR/EDD GUMBAN

MANY STALLS are seen in front of the National Shrine of Our Mother of Perpetual Help Church in Baclaran, Parañaque City.

Deutsche Bank also noted that consumers turned more pessimistic in the fourth quarter, prompting more households to save rather than splurge on costly items.

"This would likely materialize as lower growth in the near term, as household consumption comprises more than 70% of GDP in the Philippines," it added.

The BSP's latest Consumer Expectations Survey showed that the consumer confidence index worsened to -22.2% in the fourth quarter from -9.8% in the third quarter.

This was the weakest consumer sentiment logged since late 2021 or during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Philippine Statistics Authority is set to release the fourth-quarter and full-year 2025 GDP report on Thursday, Jan. 29. — **Katherine K. Chan**

a rural bank had submitted one but was still completing the requirements.

Mr. Villanueva also noted that the industry may anticipate the applications for digital banking licenses of existing digital-first rural or commercial banks, such as Salmon Bank, CIMB Bank, MariBank and OwnBank.

"(T)hey are operating like digital banks but they have not really secured a digital bank license," he said. "So, I think the better question now is who amongst those who are operating as a digital bank would be applying for a full-blown digital bank license?"

Currently, only six digital banks – Tonik Digital Bank, GoTyme Bank, Maya Bank, Overseas Filipino Bank, UNObank and Union-Digital Bank – are licensed by the central bank to operate in the Philippines.

ALI advances Garden Court Residences as zero-carbon office portfolio grows

LISTED property developer Ayala Land, Inc. (ALI) said it has allocated P488.63 million for the development of its Garden Court Residences in Taguig City.

In a stock exchange disclosure on Monday, ALI said the funding came from proceeds of the block sale of shares in its real estate investment trust AREIT, Inc. last year.

The transaction involved 12 million AREIT common shares sold at P40.78 per share, with ALI receiving the net proceeds on July 7, 2025.

Garden Court Residences is a two-hectare residential development comprising five towers within ALI's ARCA South estate.

The 364-unit project, which is 82% complete, is scheduled for completion by 2027.

The development will feature a 6,000-square-meter courtyard, sky gardens, a sky gym, a social hall and deck, and swimming pools.

ALI said it allocated P323.36 million for the project in the third quarter of 2025, P34.23 million in the fourth quarter, and P131.04 million in the first quarter of 2026.

Garden Court Residences is located within ARCA South, ALI's 74-hectare master-planned estate eyed to become Metro Manila's next central business district.

The development is accessible via the South Luzon Expressway and Bonifacio Global City through C-5 Road.

Also on Monday, ALI said it recorded the largest excellence in design for greater efficiencies (EDGE) zero carbon-certified office portfolio globally, covering 1.53 million square meters across 50 office properties in Metro Manila, Laguna, Cebu, Baguio, Iloilo, and Bacolod.

The milestone comes as part of the company's ongoing push to adopt green building features across



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its properties, the company said in a separate statement. Its tenants include a mix of corporate and business process outsourcing firms.

"By securing the EDGE Zero Carbon Certifications for our office portfolio, we are able to verify the performance of our green buildings with measurable results that support operational efficiency, and long-term asset value," ALI Chief Sustainability Officer Robert S. Lao said.

On Jan. 22, the company formally received its EDGE Zero Carbon certifications, awarded following third-party audits conducted by the Philippine Green Building Initiative.

The EDGE Zero Carbon certification, developed by the International Finance Corp. (IFC), requires buildings to first achieve EDGE Advanced certification, demonstrating at least 40% energy reduction, 20% savings in water use, and reduced embodied carbon in materials.

Projects must also operate on 100% renewable energy or verified carbon offsets while maintaining at least 75% occupancy for one year.

ALI's zero-carbon milestone aligns with its sustainability-linked financing program, which adheres to international guidelines such as the ASEAN Sustainability-Linked Bond Standards, the Sustainability-Linked Bond Principles issued by the International Capital Market

Association, and the Sustainability-Linked Loan Principles issued by the Asia Pacific Loan Market Association.

Between 2024 and 2025, the company raised about \$1 billion (around P56 billion) through sustainability-linked instruments, including a P14.2-billion sustainability-linked loan (SLL1) in July 2024, a P12.87-billion SLL2 in August 2025 from the IFC, and P29 billion in Sustainability-Linked Bonds (SLB) listed on the Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp.

The company has also set targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 42% across its malls, offices, and hotels by 2030.

ALI continues to pursue green building certifications across its malls, hotels, residential developments, logistics facilities, and mixed-use estates.

Its portfolio includes the Makati Central Business District, Bonifacio Global City, Cebu Business Park, Alvaria in Pampanga, and Ascenda in Davao City.

In the first nine months of 2025, ALI posted a net income of P21.4 billion, slightly higher than the P21.2 billion recorded in the same period last year.

At the local bourse on Monday, ALI shares fell 2.04% or 45 centavos to close at P21.60 each. — **Beatrix Marie D. Cruz**

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Usec. Aboy Paraiso
Acting Executive Director
CYBERCRIME INVESTIGATION AND COORDINATING CENTER (CICC)



Closing Keynote
ATTY. SARAH MARIA Q. SISON
Undersecretary for Policy and Legal
Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT)

Speakers / Panelists

BEYOND AWARENESS: DEVELOPING LITERACY IN A DIGITAL PHILIPPINES



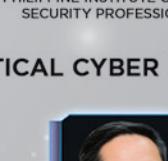
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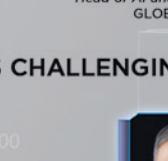
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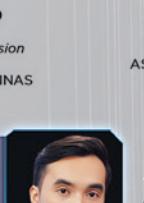
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