

# Over 60% of Asia-Pacific enterprises plan to increase sovereign AI spending

MORE THAN 60% of enterprises in Asia-Pacific (APAC) plan to increase their sovereign cloud and artificial intelligence (AI) investments over the next two years as countries in the region advance their digitalization goals, according to Accenture Research.

In Southeast Asia alone, 64% of organizations said they will ramp up their spending on technologies to comply with national security, data protection and their countries' own digital independence and growth agenda.

"Organizations in Southeast Asia are aligned with APAC's broader view on sovereign AI, with compliance, data security, and governance as top investment drivers," said Ambe Tierro, country managing director and technology lead at Accenture in the Philippines.

"With the broader adoption of AI in the Philippines, this outlook towards sovereign AI supports the national AI agenda and can further propel the innovation ecosystem in the country."

Sovereign AI refers to a country's ability to develop and deploy AI using its own infrastructure, data, models, and talent, Accenture Research said. This reduces dependency risks and allows both governments and enterprises to protect their critical assets and build AI foundations to enable long-term innovation and competitiveness.



REUTERS/DADO RUVIC/ILLUSTRATION/FILE PHOTO

"Enterprise investment in sovereign technologies is driven by the resilience agenda, with an expected focus on protecting and defending data and infrastructure in a rapidly evolving tech and policy landscape. What's equally important to long-term resilience is an organization's ability to innovate," said Ryoji Sekido, CEO of Asia Oceania and APAC for Accenture.

"By creating clarity around where data lives, how systems are protected and how new ideas can scale safely, sovereign AI presents tremendous innovation potential. As businesses recognize this and as other barriers are lowered, investments will undoubtedly accelerate. We see this opening up a unique opportunity for regional players, especially telecom companies and neo-cloud operators."

Current users of sovereign AI infrastructure in the region are public sector

organizations in regulated industries like utilities, insurance, health, and energy or oil and gas.

The study showed that 60% of APAC organizations apply sovereignty to data, but only 25% extend it to AI models, including intelligence models, which results in fragmented AI environments that prioritize control but limit intelligence autonomy and scale.

This shows that sovereign AI is not yet viewed as a source of innovation or competitive differentiation, Accenture Research said.

"While investment momentum is strong, only around one in five APAC organizations associate sovereign AI with innovation-led outcomes, suggesting that many initiatives remain framed around risk mitigation rather than value creation," it said.

"When sovereignty stops at data or infrastructure, organizations miss the opportunity to embed local context, values, and trust directly into AI decision making. Closing this gap — by extending sovereignty to where intelligence is created — is increasingly critical for building trusted, resilient, and high value AI at scale across the region."

Most Asia-Pacific organizations prefer a "hybrid sovereignty" model that balances global hyper-scaler capabilities with locally governed infrastructure due to the high cost of sovereign-grade infrastructure and

foundation models and the limited availability of local solutions, Accenture Research said.

This flexible approach is key for AI competitiveness in the region, it added.

"Our research indicates only about one-third of workloads must remain sovereign, with localization varying by country and sector. Companies must strategically determine where sovereignty matters, dialing it up or down based on risk and value. By mixing global and local providers, organizations can create flexible, secure, fit-for-purpose AI stacks, blending components to drive innovation and growth while meeting national priorities."

Over the next two years, 63% of organizations in Asia-Pacific said they are more likely to adopt technologies with sovereign capabilities, with nearly 58% of planning to increase investments in sovereign cloud, Accenture Research said.

"Enterprises recognize that full technological independence is neither practical nor desirable, and where and how infrastructure and workloads are managed and hosted matters more than who does it. Beyond data protection, sovereign AI can drive growth and competitiveness through improved performance of AI loads, greater relevancy for better customer experience, and it can accelerate national industrial AI agendas. Enterprises that recognize this are already creating new sources of value with AI," Kunal Shah, sovereign AI lead for APAC at Accenture, added. — **Bettina V. Roc**



THE NEW MACBOOK AIR with M5.

## Apple launches new MacBooks with M5 chips, bigger storage

APPLE on Tuesday unveiled updated MacBook Air and MacBook Pro models, featuring its latest M5-series chips and bigger base storage, in a bid to lure buyers in a softening PC market squeezed by rising memory costs.

The update includes a new MacBook Air powered by Apple's latest M5 chip and higher-end MacBook Pro models equipped with the new M5 Pro and M5 Max processors, which the company says deliver significant gains in performance and on-device AI capabilities.

The 13-inch MacBook Air starts at \$1,099 and now comes with 512 gigabytes of storage as standard, double the base storage of the previous generation. In the older lineup, customers had to pay \$1,199 to get a 512GB configuration, making the new starting price effectively a price cut for the same storage tier.

Since transitioning from Intel processors to its in-house M-series chips beginning in 2020, Apple has touted gains in performance and battery life, helping it differentiate from Windows-based PC makers.

The 14-inch MacBook Pro models powered by the M5 Pro chip start at \$2,199 and now come with 1 terabyte of storage as standard, up from 512GB in many earlier base configurations.

With higher base storage on the MacBook Pro, Apple has adopted a similar pricing strategy, bumping up standard configurations while keeping headline prices largely unchanged. — **Reuters**

## PLDT expands direct-to-device satellite tests to Ilocos Norte

PLDT INC., through its wireless subsidiary Smart Communications, Inc., is expanding its direct-to-device satellite connectivity tests to northern Ilocos Norte.

"The Philippines is an archipelago, and it can be challenging to reach many of our communities, particularly in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs), with traditional towers," PLDT Chief Operating Officer and Network Head Menardo G. Jimenez, Jr. said in a media release on Wednesday.

PLDT, through Smart, has partnered with Lynk Global, Inc. to test satellite technology in the country. The company said it has completed another round of field tests for its direct-to-device satellite communication service.

This latest development follows a test in Catanduanes, Smart said, adding that the technology will provide critical connectivity to remote areas.

During the trials, the parties exchanged text messages between smartphones located in Ilocos Norte and Manila. The technology also allowed them to access key public infor-

mation platforms, signaling that it could be utilized for disaster response and maritime connectivity.

"Direct-to-device satellite technology gives PLDT and Smart a powerful way to overcome the geographic challenges of serving an archipelago," Mr. Jimenez said.

In January, Smart said it is planning a commercial rollout of the technology next year.

Smart said the partnership will enable mobile communications in areas with no signal by directly connecting ordinary mobile phones to satellites. The company added that it will start by integrating its core systems with Lynk's satellite-to-mobile network before conducting live field tests using Smart's existing spectrum.

At the local bourse, PLDT shares fell P41, or 2.99%, to end at P1,329 apiece.

Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of the PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., holds a majority stake in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**



CHEVRON'S LAPU-LAPU TERMINAL IN CEBU

## Chevron invests P181.6 million to upgrade Lapu-Lapu terminal

AMERICAN multinational energy company Chevron said it has invested \$3.1 million (P181.6 million) to upgrade its terminal in Lapu-Lapu City, Cebu, boosting its storage capacity to 150,000 barrels.

In a statement on Wednesday, Chevron said the upgrade is estimated to unlock around \$1 million in annual value.

"Our investment in the Lapu-Lapu terminal is a sign that Chevron is here to stay and will continue to boost the capacity of our other local terminals," said Pongtorn "Bon" Tangmanuswong, general manager and country chairman of Chevron Philippines, Inc. (CPI).

He added that the company aims to ensure "that all corners of the Philippines have access to a reliable fuel and energy source."

The Lapu-Lapu terminal recently received its first import vessel, the *MT Chang Hang Fei Yue* Voy. No. 2518, loaded with products from South Korea.

The terminal serves as Chevron's gateway to Central Visayas, supporting fuel supply to nearby cities and municipalities driven by manufacturing, transportation, and tourism growth.

Last year, Chevron Philippines inked mutually beneficial lease agreements with Batangas Land Co.,

Inc. (BLC) for the lease of its properties in major cities around the Philippines.

Aside from the Lapu-Lapu terminal, CPI renewed its lease in San Pascual, Batangas; San Fernando (Poro), La Union; and Sasa, Davao City.

Chevron, which markets the Caltex brand of fuels and lubricants, also committed funding to these terminals' energy infrastructure to maintain the safety and effectiveness of their operations.

The company is engaged in the importation of crude oil and natural gas and in the manufacture of transportation fuels, lubricants, petrochemicals, and additives. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**



Republic of the Philippines  
**COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS**  
*Intramuros, Manila*

**ANNOUNCEMENT**  
PROCLAMATION NO. 1173

**DECLARING SATURDAY, 14 MARCH 2026 A SPECIAL (NON-WORKING) DAY IN THE AREAS COMPRISING THE SECOND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF ANTIPOLO:**

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**MALACAÑAN PALACE**  
- MANILA

**BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE PHILIPPINES**  
PROCLAMATION NO. 1173

**DECLARING SATURDAY, 14 MARCH 2026, A SPECIAL (NON-WORKING) DAY IN THE AREAS COMPRISING THE SECOND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT OF THE CITY OF ANTIPOLO**

**WHEREAS**, Republic Act (RA) No. 6645, as amended by RA No. 7166, mandates that in the event a permanent vacancy occurs in the House of Representatives at least one (1) year before the expiration of the term, the Commission on Elections shall call and hold a special election to fill the vacancy not earlier than sixty days nor longer than ninety days after the occurrence of vacancy;

**WHEREAS**, a vacancy occurred in the position of Member of House of Representatives, Second Legislative District of the City of Antipolo due to the death of the incumbent member;

**WHEREAS**, a local election for the position of Member of House of Representatives, Second Legislative District of the City of Antipolo shall be held on 14 March 2026;

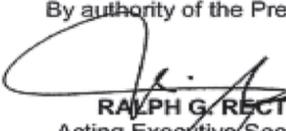
**WHEREAS**, there is a need to declare Saturday, 14 March 2026 as a special (non-working) holiday to enable the people of the areas comprising the Second Legislative District of the City of Antipolo to properly exercise their right to vote;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, **RALPH G. RECTO**, Acting Executive Secretary, by authority of the President, **FERDINAND R. MARCOS, JR.**, do hereby declare Saturday, 14 March 2026, a special (non-working) day in the areas comprising the Second Legislative District of the City of Antipolo.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Republic of the Philippines to be affixed.

Done in the City of Manila, this 20<sup>th</sup> day of February, in the year of Our Lord, Two Thousand and Twenty Six.

By authority of the President:



**RALPH G. RECTO**  
Acting Executive Secretary

Office of the President  
MALACAÑANG RECORDS OFFICE

**CERTIFIED COPY**

**ATTY. LOVELY V. TOLENTINO-NAVA**  
DIRECTOR IV

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