

# #DIGITALTRADEPH

LATEST NEWS & UPDATES ABOUT THE DIGITAL  
TRADE IN THE PHILIPPINES

FEBRUARY 2023



### ***PH businesses urged to make good use of RCEP benefits***

As the country finally ratified the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) after two years, Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Alfredo Pascual has encouraged Philippine-based businesses to take advantage of the benefits of the new trade pact.

### ***PH elected chair of APEC's IPR experts group***

The Philippines has been elected as chair of the 21-member countries of Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation's Intellectual Property Rights Experts Group (APEC-IPEG), a new role seen to expand the reach of the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines' (IPOP HL) in championing the intellectual property (IP) system.

### ***IDC Opens Nominations for the 7th Future Enterprise Awards for the Philippines***

In a recent report, IDC predicts that spending on digital technology by organizations will grow at 8x the economy in 2023, while spending on digital technologies is forecasted to rise to \$2.8 trillion globally by 2025. CEOs are optimistic that 34.6% (by 2025) and 40.9% (by 2027) of revenue will come from digital products, services, and/or experiences.

### ***PLDT plots data transmission capacity boost***

In a statement on Thursday, the telco giant said that laying down more cables would depend on the demand for international network capacity, which is seen to support the digital economy.

### ***Government leaders gather at Microsoft's annual public sector ICT summit, Asenso Pilipinas, to build a secure and sustainable digital Philippines***

Microsoft Philippines yesterday hosted Asenso Pilipinas, its annual public sector cloud summit alongside partners Cloud4C, Crayon, SVI, and Tech One Global. This year's event brought together public sector leaders and industry experts to share insights and resources, as well as initiate discussions on empowering digital acceleration on a national scale.

### ***Filipino co-ops discuss digital at their first national congress***

In a dedicated session on Cooperatives for Digitalization, Ann Cuisia, founder of DigiCoop, a Filipino online service provider for co-ops, said current requirements of the traditional financial system are "rigid" and hamper the growth of the sector. Cuisia warned co-ops to "digitise or die", adding that digital tools make to access finance and respond to government mandates towards modernisation.

### ***Need to tax digital activities seen as urgent, but 'equitable' taxation of platforms an issue***

The taxing of digital activities remains a matter of urgency given the government's need for revenue, but it must do so with an eye towards equitable development, given that many of the platforms in use here are based overseas and difficult to tax, the Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) said.

### ***PBBM welcomes digital farmer registry proposal; PH to ship durian to China in March***

Marcos welcomed the PSAC's recommendations to digitalize the farmer registry and create a digital food balance sheet that will provide real-time information on agricultural products.

### ***Philippines assumes chairmanship of APEC-IPEG***

The Philippines has been elected as the chair of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation's Intellectual Property Rights Experts Group (APEC-IPEG) for 2023 to 2024, according to the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOP HL). The IPOP HL said the new role is seen to expand its reach in championing rules, dialogues and best practices that enable the intellectual property (IP) system to be a vehicle for accelerated innovation and creativity.

### ***BSV Stories Episode 9 looks at blockchain's role as the Philippines gears up for digital transformation***

The country's President, Ferdinand Bongbong Marcos Jr., has pushed for digitalization and the use of new technologies in the government to ensure efficient and fast delivery of services to the public. Blockchain, the emerging technology behind Bitcoin, is one of the new technologies that government agencies are exploring.

### ***The Road to Trade Winds ASEAN: Philippines***

The United States and the Philippines have had a very close trade relationship for more than a hundred years. With a bilateral trading relationship valued at over \$30 billion annually, the Philippines punches above its weight when compared against that of much larger neighboring countries in Southeast Asia.

### **Sybrin brings digital transformation services to Philippines**

Sybrin realizes the immense potential of the Philippines as one of the most vibrant economies in Southeast Asia, with strong growth prospects and industries that are driving the country forward. Given that Sybrin has excelled in comparable conditions in Africa with similar industries and technological environments, they are enthusiastic about their decision to enter the market as a first in Asia.

### **New survey findings PH becomes hotspot for global talent – survey**

The latest Robert Walters Global Salary Survey 2023, an authoritative analysis and benchmark on salary trends worldwide, including insights about recruitment, showed the Philippines is expected to be a resource hub not only for traditional Multi-National Companies but for start-ups as well.

### **ASEAN business leaders offer to help Philippine develop MSMEs**

ASEAN-BAC and KADIN Indonesia chairman Arsjad Rasjid said the Manila roadshow aims to strengthen trade and investment within the ASEAN region and also foster the bilateral partnership between the Philippines and Indonesia.

### **Government urged to address gaps in access to finance**

In a PIDS policy note, foreign affairs research specialist Jovito Jose Katigbak, Philippine APEC (Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation) Study Center Network project evaluation officer Jean Clarisse Carlos, and Philippine Competition Commission program officer Jill Angeli Bacasmas said that while women-led MSMEs have the potential to realize gains from taking part in cross-border e-commerce, there are challenges preventing their full participation.

### **Fragmented Digital Regulations are Constraining ASEAN's Digital Economy**

The ASEAN digital economy is running sub-optimally due to fragmented regulatory frameworks. Increased coherence will enable the region's firms to break out of their local markets and raise revenues from the expansion of consumer markets.

### **PSAC launches digital literacy program**

At the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) public forum "From Plan to Action: Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028" held at the Philippine International Convention Center (PICC), the movement's launch concretized PSAC's vision of empowering Filipino citizens through technology for a connected and inclusive society.

### **Upskilling women for the digital economy**

In collaboration with Milieu Insight, She Loves Data survey results showed that 87 percent of women in the region are interested in taking courses to develop their professional skills. 44 percent of employees in Southeast Asia and more than half (57 percent) in Indonesia intend to make a career switch within the next 5 years.

### **House leaders back RCEP deal ratification**

House Speaker Martin Romualdez has led his congressmen-colleagues in expressing their full support for the immediate ratification by the Senate of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) deal.

### **IT infra services provider sees more AI growth in PH**

Yndryl's most recent survey of 500 top executives across the ASEAN (with 100 from the Philippines) revealed 48 percent of organizations in the country already have Data & AI strategy as a key priority.

### **Preliminary estimate for 'strategic goods' exports at \$4.5 billion in 2022, little changed — Trade dep't**

Philippine exports of "strategic goods" — military goods, as well as those with dual civilian and military applications — amounted to \$4.5 billion in 2022, little changed from a year earlier, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said in a preliminary estimate.

### **Sandro Marcos: RCEP to help boost MSMEs, electronic trade**

In his sponsorship speech, Marcos said the trade deal's ultimate goal of regional economic integration would be beneficial to MSMEs, as well as the electronic and borderless trade.

### **DBM to support BARMM digitalization initiative**

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) assured its support for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao's (BARMM) digitalization initiative in its system of governance.

### **Lawmakers ratify entry to world's largest trade pact**

Philippine lawmakers approved Tuesday the country's entry into the world's biggest free trade bloc, with supporters arguing it will boost investment and jobs, but detractors warned it could hurt farmers. [...] The pact should help reduce costs and make life easier for companies by letting them export products anywhere within the bloc without meeting separate requirements for each country.

### **Full shift to digital TV standard in 2023 'still tentative,' NTC's Lopez admits**

NTC Commissioner Ella Blanca Lopez said in a chance interview that while the agency targets to meet its deadline for the shutdown of analog television this year, she acknowledged that this would be a moving target.

### **'Mega-trade deal': NEDA says RCEP to bolster Philippines' position as investment hub**

National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio Balisacan on Wednesday said the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) would bolster the Philippines' position as an investment hub.

### **PH to host 3rd leg of APEC Business Advisory Council in July**

Headlining the region's private sector priorities on various concerns, the Philippines will host the third leg of this year's Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Business Advisory Council (ABAC) in July.

### **[Editorial] Digital innovations, sustainability, and Philippine super cities**

The annual report, which used to be called the Top 100 Outsourcing Cities in the World, was started in the late 2000s and is the benchmark used by most BPO companies when they do location studies. When the report was started, there were only four criteria used to assess the readiness of cities worldwide to host BPO operations. Cities then were measured according to their business environment, infrastructure, talent availability, and cost.

### **Congress delegation in SG to study e-gov through PSAC-organized learning trip**

The benchmarking visit was organized following President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.'s commitment earlier this year to certify the E-Governance Act as urgent. The urgent certification of the Bill was one of the recommendations made by PSAC, led by its Digital Infrastructure Sector, whose representatives have actively participated in the Technical Working Group (TWG) meetings, offering expert recommendations to help shape relevant legislation that will allow the government to best serve the Filipino people in a modern, technology-driven society.

### **Trade dept counts on European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines' support for resumption of PHL, EU FTA talks**

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is hoping that the European Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (ECCP), along with European companies, will assist in pushing for the resumption of the Philippines-European Union Free Trade Agreement (PH-EU FTA) negotiations.

### **[Editorial] Philippine strategic environment for corporate planning**

Enhanced connectivity is now more within reach with the opening of the telecom sector to 100% foreign direct investments. There are some megaprojects in the telecom sector, like the submarine cable connecting the US to Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte that Amazon and Meta are building that will be a game changer in significantly improving connectivity that can transform a city like Laoag into a major venue for data centers.

### **House panel OKs bill revising IP Code to fight online piracy**

The House of Representatives Committee on Trade and Industry approved on Tuesday the bill providing for the revised Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines to ensure that scientists, inventors, artists, and other gifted citizens are encouraged to continue creating and innovating products.

### **Puregold becomes first PH retailer to open TikTok shop**

Puregold opened a shop in the wildly popular video-sharing platform TikTok, becoming the first Filipino retailer to use the popular platform's e-commerce feature. It initially offered curated groceries to consumers, which include exclusive and affordable product bundles that range from snack packs and personal care kits to pantry essentials.

### **ASEAN Digital Ministers adopt Boracay declaration**

Ministers from Member States of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) who gathered in Boracay Island, Malay, Aklan for the 3rd ASEAN Digital Ministers (ADGMIN) Meeting on February 9-10, 2023 collectively adopted the Boracay Digital Declaration that resulted from the gathering. The adoption is in recognition of various issues, concerns and impacts that have affected the communities of the ASEAN Member States, like the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to build a resilient foundation for the region's growing digital presence.

### **ASEAN Needs to Prepare Now for the Future of Work**

Amid rapid economic and technological changes, Southeast Asian governments need to offer generous subsidies for digital upskilling.

### **Measure protecting Pinoy creative artists OK'd**

The committee on trade and industry of the House of Representatives has approved a bill to protect the intellectual property rights of Filipino creative artists and help bolster the country's economic recovery.

### **Converge supports ASEAN ICT chiefs' push for digital inclusion, transformation**

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### **LTO at the forefront of digital operations**

The onset of information technology and the continuing push of President Marcos to encourage government agencies to make full use of digitalization are making an impact on making the lives of citizens a little easier. The initiative, started by former President Duterte, had the Department of Transportation, the mother agency of the LTO, as one of the active supporters of digitalization.

### **Japanese firms pledge electronics investments in Philippines**

The Philippines has secured billions of pesos worth of investment pledges from Japanese companies engaged in semiconductors, electronics and wiring harness, which Malacañang said would generate more than 10,000 jobs for Filipinos.

### **Networking group reports strong growth**

Business Network International (BNI), a leading international networking group, has passed millions of referrals that has translated into billions of dollars in business generated between member.

### **Victorias City in Negros Occidental commended for its digital programs**

Formally introduced by Mayor Javier Miguel Benitez during the launching of digital-related government programs on Jan. 30, Victorias City's ongoing digital initiatives include "Sidlak City Digital Network Assets" and "Project VECTOR."

### **DOST Promotes E-Learning Via Digital Library To Bulacan Students**

Under the Regional Grants-in-Aid Program, the DOST-3 provided an S&T (science and technology) digital library and interactive multimedia audio-visual teaching aid to the Plaridel Elementary School in Plaridel town, Bulacan province last Monday to enhance the teaching and learning experiences of the teachers and students.

### **AMLC warns money mules scams rising in Philippines**

The Anti-Money Laundering Council (AMLC) is ramping up its campaign against money mules as the number and value of suspicious transactions rose sharply starting 2021 with the emergence of digital banking and electronic wallets.

### **ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting highlights collaborative work towards 'sustainable digital future'**

This year's ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting focused on the importance of collaborative efforts towards achieving "sustainable digital development" in Southeast Asia.

### **Why PPA wants digital registration, monitoring of container vans implemented**

PPA General Manager Jay Daniel Santiago explained that the delay, and sometimes, failure in returning container vans, and the issue of the difficulty in getting back container deposits are decades-long problem that has been repeatedly raised by shippers, importers and custom brokers—complaints that he personally encountered since he first assumed the leadership of the agency in 2016.

### **PBBM supports AboitizPower and JERA push for greener fuels in the Philippines**

Under the MOU, AboitizPower and JERA commit to collaborative efforts in assessing the feasibility of ammonia co-fired power generation and further development of the ammonia and hydrogen value chains in the Philippines. This will support the decarbonization efforts of AboitizPower and the Philippines, with long-lasting effects that will benefit the entire world.

### **Japan, UNICEF donate digital learning resources to Valenzuela**

This support aims to give young school learners easier access to science and math subjects by using the early-grade digital learning resources developed together with the Foundation for the Promotion of Science and Mathematics Education and Research (FPSMER).

### **PLDT pushes digital upskilling**

The telco giant said it has pioneered initiatives aligned with the the digital upskilling focus area of the GoDigital Pilipinas (GDP) movement, an initiative recently launched by the Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC).

### **Allowing online shops to sell insurance urged**

Based on the policy paper called “InsurTech: Driving Broader Insurance Access” authored by law firm Romulo Mabanta Buenaventura Sayoc & de los Angeles, the full potential of online shopping platforms in the Philippines has up to now not yet been maximized.

### **It's a go for PSAC's Go Digital Pilipinas Movement**

The Private Sector Advisory Council (PSAC) Digital Infrastructure group recently took giant strides in fulfilling its mandate of bridging the digital divide through the promotion of digital literacy and the building of a sustainable digital ecosystem through the launch of the GoDigital Pilipinas (GDP) movement last January 30th.

### **Asean to potentially enter world's Top 5 Digital Economy in 2025**

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### **'Green' trade policy to help mitigate climate change impact — ADB**

The bank said that the region must better integrate trade and investment policy into climate action by shifting to more services-driven economies and taking advantage of technological advancements.

### **Marcos wants closer collaboration with Japan**

In a pre-departure speech delivered at the Villamor Air Base, Marcos said his visit to Japan is “essential” as it is part of a larger foreign policy agenda to forge closer political, defense and economic ties with major countries in the region amid a challenging global environment.

### **Lawmakers OK bill to protect freelancers**

With an overwhelming 250 votes, the chamber passed House Bill (HB) 6718 or the “Freelance Workers Protection Act,” which also mandates the institutionalization of benefits such as night differential and hazard pay for freelance workers whenever they are applicable.

### **Philippines: PEZA records 83.69% increase in investment in January 2023**

In a release shared with CoinGeek, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) confirmed the spike in the number of investments in January, an 83.69% increase from the figures of January 26. PEZA's Officer-in-Charge Tereso Panga revealed that 19 approved projects were the main drivers of the growth spike experienced in the economic zone.

### **SEC taps UP Law Center for fintech regulations**

The corporate watchdog and the UPLC have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for the conduct of joint research projects, capacity building and policy analysis, and resource and information sharing concerning fintech.

### **Smart Digital Retail Philippines Moving to Another Date**

Smart Digital Retail Philippines would like to extend the opportunity for sponsors, attendees and partners to join the biggest event in the Philippine retail ecosystem.

### **PH's domestic submarine fibre cable project on track for April 2023 completion**

Philippine Domestic Submarine Cable Network (PDSCN), is on track for completion in April of this year to further boost digitalisation in the countryside, Globe said as it geared for a fresh round of cable landings this new year.

### **Tougher law needed to protect ICT system vs. cyber attacks**

Senate Bill No. 1701 or the Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Act (CIIPA) filed by Senator Raffy Tulfo will establish a framework for ensuring the security and reliability of the country's digital ecosystem, which is critical to achieving the new administration's goal of safe, seamless, and reliable digitalization and connectivity.

### **3 strategies for delivering digital transformation in the Asia-Pacific**

The Asia-Pacific is ripe with opportunities for digital transformation. By 2030, Southeast Asia's internet economy is forecasted to reach \$1 trillion, driven by a fast-growing base of digital consumers and applications. South Asian countries are embracing digitisation widely and strategically.

### **Malaysia, Singapore framework on cooperation in digital economy can be role model for Asean countries: Tengku Zafrul**

The Malaysia-Singapore Framework on Cooperation in Digital Economy can be a role model for other Asean countries in preparing their talent, small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and start-ups for the digital decade.

### **DICT seeks to enhance digital cooperation with China**

The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) disclosed its plan to pursue an enhanced digital cooperation with China's Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT).

### **Why business groups oppose digital container registry, monitoring, PPA explains**

The Department of Transportation (DOTr) wrote a letter to President Marcos explaining why it should not be implemented, with reliable sources saying that the PPA was not consulted and was not even informed that it forwarded a letter to Malacañang against the TOP-CRMS implementation.

### **[Opinion] Why the Philippines must embrace digitalization**

Digitalization is transforming the world and has become an integral part of modern society. It plays a crucial role in shaping a country's economic, social, and political landscape.

### **[Opinion] 'Synergy towards a sustainable digital future'**

The Philippines will host the 3rd ASEAN Digital Ministers Meeting (ADGMIN), ASEAN Digital Senior Officials Meeting (ADGSOM) and related meetings with dialogue partners. This will be the first in-person ADGMIN and ADGSOM since the pandemic. This will be held on Feb. 6-10, 2023, spearheaded by the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT).

### **Digital Labour Platforms Must Provide Philippine Gig Workers a Fair Deal**

The inherent dangers of "labour platformization", compounded by government under-regulation, are apparent in the Philippines. Workers can become chained to financial commitments, and squeezed by seemingly predatory practices of downstream industries.

### **Rural banks can accelerate financial inclusion in Southeast Asia.**

In Southeast Asia, rural banks by definition are traditional banks that serve farmers, fishermen, workers or communities away from the highly-dense metropolitan cities in a country.

### **[Report] Regional tensions may fracture Asia-Pacific trade, financial ties**

A recent report warns geopolitical tensions could fracture trade and financial relationships in the Asia-Pacific.

### **Digital agenda of the Philippines**

The government's aim is to be a prosperous middle-class society by 2040 and we aspire to be a globally competitive knowledge economy.

### **Digital transformation named as PH's national priority**

The DICT is creating and implementing both mid-term and long-term plans for digital transformation across government sectors through improved interoperability and collaboration across the government ecosystems.

**Senator asks DTI to help BPO workers keep up with AI evolution**

A Senator has asked the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) to take measures that will help business process outsourcing (BPO) workers keep pace with rapid advancements in artificial intelligence (AI), which threaten the role of human resources in the industry.

**PHL GSP renewal stalled as US works on IPEF, ambassador says**

The renewal of the Philippines' participation in the US Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) trade program is taking a back seat to the work being done in the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF), a US trade deal.

**BIR studying implementation of tax refund for tourists**

The Philippines collects a 12 percent value-added tax on goods, and the plan is to allow foreigners taking goods purchased in the Philippines home to get a VAT refund. This is similar to what other countries offer, such as Japan.

**IMF maintains PHL growth forecast**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) kept its growth projection of 5% for the Philippines this year, even as it slashed the forecast for the ASEAN-5 grouping amid a looming global economic slowdown.