

Group debuts 'TelePresence' in RP

PLDT teams up with Cisco, Tata Comms

by ANNA VALMERO
Inquirer.net

THE Philippine Long Distance Co. (PLDT) partnered with Cisco and Tata Communications to bring the first commercial telepresence technology in the country, officials said.

Telepresence combines high-definition video conferencing technology with spatial audio conferencing. It offers life-like, face-to-face virtual meetings for users, according to Stephen Thomas Misa, country manager of Cisco Philippines.

Nerissa Ramos, first vice-president and head for PLDT's corporate business group, said the country's first public telepresence studio—and the ninth worldwide—would be opened in PLDT's Makati office, followed by two more rooms in Cebu and Davao by end of the year.

Christoffer Steffens, Tata Communications director for public telepresence, said the PLDT public telepresence studio would be connected to Tata Comms' global network of public rooms in Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Hyderabad and Gurgaon in India; Boston in the United States and London in the United Kingdom.

Pioneer global provider of Cisco TelePresence Tata Communications plans to establish and connect up to 100 public telepresence rooms globally by end of 2009. This in addition to over 300 private studios, added Steffens.

Steffens revealed plans to connect the existing private telepresence networks in education, technology and government offices.

An area of growth for telepres-

ence is telemedicine or remote diagnostics, Steffens added.

Misa added PLDT's public studio would be connected to the public Cisco Telepresence Suite in Santa Clara, California.

PLDT, which is the exclusive local provider of the service, said the telepresence offering comes in two flavors: Public Studio Telepresence and Private Managed Telepresence.

The PLDT Public Studio Telepresence is a 24-hour, pay-per-use service. The service would be tailored fit for organizations that hold meetings and for Overseas Filipino workers wanting to hold virtual reunions, said Ramos.

The Private Managed TelePresence is a fully managed service, which includes a high-speed bandwidth facility ideal for organizations that require always-on collaboration with counterparts abroad, said Ramos.

A screen for projecting life-like sizes of two persons requires at least 10 megabits per second of connection to enable the service, said Misa. A telepresence studio could handle six to 18 people, he added.

Instead of traveling abroad for business meetings, corporations now have an option to meet with clients in telepresence rooms. This could save them up to \$260 million spent on annual travel costs. ■

Spider 'sumo' makes appearance in Baguio

by ELMER KRISTIAN DAUIGOY
Inquirer.net

BAGUIO CITY—Spiders can bridge the cultural gap between Filipinos and Japanese in this city.

Wanting to strengthen ties with residents here, the Japanese Association in Northern Luzon Inc. (JANL) staged for the first time on Saturday a "sumo match" between spiders to mark

Baguio's centennial.

Twenty-two children gathered in Barangay Loakan here and unleashed their prized spider fighters.

1st spider fight

Hiddenbu Oguni, JANL president, expressed gratitude to residents, especially the children, who supported what he called "the first official spider fighting contest in the Philippines."

BPO industry to survive crisis, says RP firms

PAGE A6 ◀

"These IT jobs are type of jobs that are permanently lost. But BPO should be explored. There are two types: one is voice and the other is non-voice; it is the non-voice that should be looked into," Lacson said.

Voice-type BPO services involve answering queries regarding products and product concerns, as well as telemarketing. Non-voice type BPO services encompass engineering design, legal and medical transcription, design, animation, software development, among others.

"Retail in the US has gone down so voice type went down as well. There is a rise in the non-voice type of industry because of the European entry as well as President Obama's stimulus package providing more jobs in

this sector," said Lacson.

Apart from BPOs, Lacson also cited the knowledge process outsourcing that the organization is pushing.

"By providing our services, we are 'Filipinizing' the international community, strengthening our economy as well," he said.

Lacson said Filipinos should change their mindset when it comes to offering their services.

"Filipinos should take pride in their work. You go anywhere around the world and street sweepers, garbage collectors, nannies, they are all proud of what they do. Mga Pilipino masyadong diploma-based ang mentality [Filipinos have a diploma-based mentality] and that has to change. Find dignity in what you do and be proud of it," Lacson said. ■

Since February, Oguni and the Japanese community have been preparing for the city's centennial in September. They came up with the spider-fighting tournament to promote the common game that Filipino and Japanese boys play.

"It's a very unique and great event to celebrate the centennial," Oguni said.

The spider sumo was also a part of an ongoing international study by Japanese scientists.

The Arachnological Society of Japan sent spider expert Mikio Sekine to the Philippines to observe spider fighting. "He came

here to learn about spiders from you. Please teach him about your spiders," Oguni said as he introduced Sekine.

Sekine is known in the scientific community as the Japanese Spider Man. He teaches high school biology in Osaka but his study of spiders has taken him to other Southeast Asian countries.

400-year-old

Since last year, he has been surveying spider fighting in universities outside Japan but without much success.

"In my survey, spider fighting is only done in Japan and in the Philippines," Sekine said through an interpreter. ■

Gov't sees P53B in biofuel investments

by AMY R. REMO
Inquirer.net

DESPITE the economic slowdown, the government expects as much as P53 billion in new investments going to the biofuel sector over the next few years, Energy Secretary Angelo Reyes said.

These investments were expected to come from over a dozen companies that have registered their projects with the Board of Investments or are seeking endorsements from the Department of Energy, Reyes told the Asia Biofuel Investment Summit 2009.

"There is a great growth potential for the local biofuels industry," Reyes said.

Reyes said the Philippines' biodiesel requirement would increase to 160 million liters in 2014 from 133 million this year.

For bioethanol, the requirement will rise to 536 million liters in 2014 from 208 million liters this year, he said. ■

[TheWeekthatWas]

10M Filipinos participate in Earth Hour

LAST Saturday, March 28, at precisely 8:30pm, various parts of the country switched off the lights for a full hour to keep with the worldwide "Earth Hour," a noble attempt to call for action on climate change.

RP's effort was led by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), the Department of Energy, and the Green Switch Movement.

National Director of Earth Hour Philippines Yeb Saño said the Philippines ranked number one in having the most number of cities and municipalities which participated in Earth Hour, with a total of 647 cities and municipalities switching off the lights.



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Leading software company to continue to be an investment haven in RP



PRESIDENT Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo recently visited the office of one of

the country's leading software companies and expressed optimism of the country's position as an information and software industry investment haven in the region.

At the Oracle Global Development and Delivery Center at the Bonifacio Global City in Taguig, the president also held an executive session with the top officials of the company.

GMA also had high praises for the company for its continued belief in the capability of the country to host foreign investors despite the global economic crisis.

Oracle is currently the world's largest business software company serving more than 320,000 customers, including 100 of the Fortune 100 which represents a variety of industries in more than 145 countries around the world.

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DFA determined to continue issuance of e-passports

IN an effort to make traveling convenient for millions of Filipino workers, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said there is a need to continue the e-passport project.

"The e-passport project is an important government infrastructure project in line with the DFA's mandate to provide secure and globally accepted passports essential to every Filipino, in particular the more than eight million OFWs," Foreign Affairs spokesman Ed Malaya said.

The DFA launched the machine-readable passport project ahead of the April 1, 2010 deadline imposed by the International Civil Aviation Office (ICASO) to upgrade the passport system among all its member-countries. ■



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