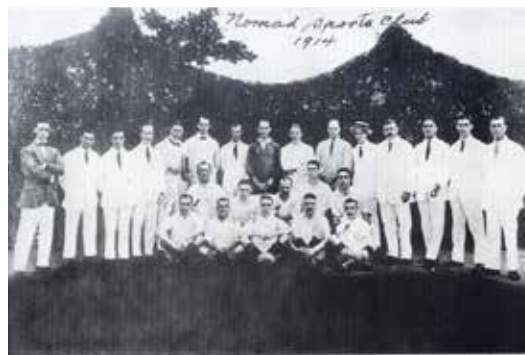




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# The IMMIGRANT



Vol. 4 No.10 Q1 2015  
Philippine Edition  
ISSN No.



www.theimmigrant.com.ph

## Government, private sector outline needed reforms, Sophia Samaniego reports

**T**he jury is still out on whether the Philippines is preparing well enough for the formal establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Economic Community (AEC), which will bring together the member economies of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) into a single economic unit, at the end of the year.

On one hand, the Philippine government, through the Department of Trade and Industry, has long declared that the country was well-positioned to compete and take advantage of the opportunities from an integrated regional economy, as it is one of the most liberalized states in ASEAN.

“We are poised to compete because we have liberalized ahead of the others. Many of our business people and our sectors are already competitive and therefore any further liberalization will be to our advantage,” Trade Secretary Gregory L. Domingo explained.

“Our economy is very strong even with those (foreign ownership) restrictions. Many countries including our neighbors in the north have a lot more restrictions than us, and they’ve shown tremendous growth. While these restrictions are irritants, they are not major blocks to our high growth,” he earlier said.

On the other hand, the private sector, represented by the local business groups, has been calling

on the government to provide more badly needed assistance because local firms, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), are expected to reel from the onslaught of foreign companies and brands that are expected to set up shop in the Philippines.

Business groups lament that the increasingly stiff competition from foreign brands, coupled with the country’s high power and logistics costs, continued port congestion, lack of SME financing, and burdensome, repetitive government related procedures will hamper the growth, if not cripple altogether, vulnerable sectors including agriculture.

There is general agreement, however, that the AEC will indeed

bring in new social, political and economic opportunities that should be tapped, as well as hurdles and challenges that the Philippines should overcome if it wants to leverage on the expected growth in the region.

The AEC is seen to transform the 10 ASEAN member states into a single market and production base, to be characterized by the free flow of goods, services, skilled labor, investments and capital.

ASEAN, with its combined population of more than 600 million, is one of the fastest growing economic regions in the world. It has a combined gross domestic product (GDP) of about \$2.3 trillion (as of

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Photo by Ferdz Decena



PH braces

From page 1



Photo by Ferdz Decena

2012), while its total trade with the rest of the world stands at about \$2.5 trillion.

For the Philippines, this means having the potential to further increase its trade and investments within the region, open opportunities for many SMEs to venture out and expand their market reach, and, if it plays its cards right, the country can also serve as a launchpad, a hub, or a base for many foreign firms wanting to cement their presence in the region.

There is thus an earnest and aggressive push being made by the Philippines to woo more foreign investors into setting up their production facilities in the country, on the back of an attractive incentive package offered through the various economic zones and under the Investment Priorities Plan.

So far, the bulk or more than 70 percent of the work needed to establish the AEC has already been completed, government officials said.

By virtue of the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement (ATIGA), more than 99 percent of goods traded in Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Indonesia, and Brunei have been at zero tariff since January 2010, while Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam have been offering 0-5 percent duties on 98.6 percent of goods sourced within the region.

A number of critical products are still protected by tariffs within ASEAN such as rice, sugar, swine, and chicken.

Philippine tariffs on most product lines have already been eliminated except for rice, duties for which will be cut to 35 percent from 40 percent, and for sugar, which will be cut to 5 percent, this year.

Other products that still have duties are live chicken and swine, meat of chicken and swine, sweet potatoes, cassava, and corn.

However, the remaining measures needed to establish the AEC are proving to be the most difficult as this will tackle the so-called non-tariff barriers (NTBs) in each ASEAN country.

According to Jayant Menon, lead economist of the Office of Regional Economic Integration at the Asian Development Bank (ADB), these barriers include infrastructure, intellectual property rights protection, customs automation and modernization, addressing red tape and other forms of corruption,

streamlining business procedures and implementing a competition policy.

The harmonization of such policies across the 10 ASEAN member states may also prove to be difficult in some cases, as it would require a country to embark on constitutional changes, he explained.

In the Philippines, the biggest NTBs reportedly were infrastructure, customs and government procedures, and red tape.

The government, however, has been implementing measures to ease the processes of doing business in the country. It has also been conducting information campaigns across the country to help more firms become aware of and tap these expected opportunities.

Programs meant to train, educate and enhance the skills of local SMEs are also being undertaken.

Other related state agencies and bureaus are also doing their part to help facilitate trade and investments such as the Bureau of Customs, which is undergoing a modernization program to weed out red tape, graft and corruption within its ranks.

Business groups, for their part, have embarked on initiatives to help members, particularly the SMEs, which face even greater pressure to survive amid an integrated regional economy.

***“The ASEAN Economic Community is seen transforming the 10 ASEAN member states into a single market and production base, to be characterized by the free flow of goods, services, skilled labor, investments and capital.”***

The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI), in particular, has laid down a strategic game plan that will help its members.

The said plan will see the conduct of weekly industry meetings aimed not only at identifying the new needs and challenges being faced by SMEs, but also at providing an avenue where PCCI members can come up with new strategies that will help more enterprises move up the value chain.

The key, PCCI president Alfredo M. Yao stressed, was to produce high-value products here to make local SMEs more competitive compared with their neighbors in the region.

However, with only a few months into the expected completion of the AEC, it is no longer, at this point, a question of whether or not the Philippines is prepared. What will be crucial is for both the government and the private sector to aggressively work together on initiatives and programs to ensure that Filipinos and local firms are able to maximize the opportunities and benefits that an integrated regional economy can bring. ●

Year of the Wood Sheep brings good tidings

After a tumultuous 2014 that saw the imprisonment of senators allegedly involved in the pork barrel scam, escalation of the territorial dispute between the Philippines and China, and yet another set of devastating typhoons, the Year of the Wood Sheep promises to bring in the calm after the fierce storm.

According to feng shui expert Marites Allen, the Year of the Wood Sheep that will run from February 19, 2015 to February 7, 2016 symbolizes optimism and flexibility for compromise and progress.

And since the sheep is the eighth sign in Chinese astrology, the year is considered to be extra lucky and chances are great that this year will bring in both fortune and prosperity – quite a break from the eventful Year of the Horse.

According to Allen, the Wood element industries will have great opportunities this year. These include fashion, textile, paper, and wood. Favorable conditions are likewise in store for the Metal element industries, such as manufacturing and engineering.

On the other hand, the Fire and Earth industries will have an “active” but “competitive” year.

Fire industries include those in the stock market, restaurants, energy, power generation, oil and gas fields, while the Earth industries include those in the chemical, insurance, property and construction sectors.

A challenging year, meanwhile, is predicted for the Water element industries such as shipping, transport, alcohol, fishing and banking.

Adding even more positive vibes to 2015 is the fact that all five elements – earth, fire, water, wood and metal - and two sets of “secret friends” are in the stars.

This phenomenon is considered “a very positive indication for economic recovery and progress.” ●



Photo by Ferdz Decena

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**ON THE COVER: Happy New Year!**  
Filipinos take part in the joyous celebration of the Chinese New Year in Binondo, Manila. The photo was taken by Ferdz Decena, an award-winning travel photographer, writer and blogger whose works have been published in various titles here and abroad.



# *Padi Pamin Tusu Tasos* for Rustan's





# ASEAN economic integration and Intellectual Property Rights

ASEAN discusses need to create knowledge-based region, Atty. Ramon Esguerra explains

## What is the goal of the ASEAN Economic Integration by 2015?

The goal of the regional economic integration by 2015 is the establishment of an ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) by the following ASEAN member countries: Brunei Darussalam, the Kingdom of Cambodia, the Republic of Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, the Union of Myanmar, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Singapore, the Kingdom of Thailand and the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam.

## What document governs the establishment of AEC?

The AEC Blueprint serves as a master plan guiding the establishment of the AEC by 2015. The ASEAN leaders adopted the said AEC Blueprint at the 13th ASEAN Summit on November 20, 2007 in Singapore.

## What is the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC)?

The AEC envisages the following key characteristics: (a) a single market and production base, (b) a highly competitive economic region, (c) a region of equitable economic development, and (d) a region fully integrated into the global economy.

*The AEC areas of cooperation include human resources development and capacity building, recognition of professional qualifications, closer consultation on macroeconomic and financial policies, trade financing measures, enhanced infrastructure and communications connectivity, development of electronic transactions through e-ASEAN, integrating industries across the region to promote regional sourcing, and enhancing private sector involvement for the building of the AEC. In short, the AEC will transform ASEAN into a region with free movement of goods, services, investment, skilled labor, and freer flow of capital.*

## What is the role of Intellectual Property (IP) and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) in the establishment of AEC?

IP policy can influence both the volume and quality of external trade and investment and the transfers of advanced, proprietary technologies. IP creativity is a major determinant of local value added and external competitiveness. Regional cooperation in the protection of IPR is an important tool for AEC in establishing a **highly competitive economic region**.

*IP and IPR creation, commercialization, and protection have been a significant source of comparative advantage of enterprises and economies and a major driver of their competitive strategies. Indeed, ASEAN is fully aware of the pressing need for a long-term policy commitment to collectively transform the region into one which is largely based on knowledge, driven by innovation and sustained by life-long learning.*

## As a background, what are the key agreements or documents governing the cooperation on IPR protection in the region?

ASEAN member countries signed the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Intellectual Property Cooperation in Bangkok on December 15, 1995. The objectives of this agreement include, among others, exploring the possibility of setting up of an ASEAN patent system, an ASEAN Patent Office, an ASEAN trademark system, and an ASEAN Trademark Office.

Likewise, regional cooperation in IPR has been guided by the ASEAN IPR Action Plan 2004-2010 and the Work Plan for ASEAN Cooperation on Copyrights which aim to develop a culture of learning and innovation

supported by a friendlier IP profile to businesses, investors, inventors and creators in ASEAN. In addition, these Plans are also designed to foster better public awareness, coordination and networking, predictability, capacity building, and contribution of IP industries to competitiveness and development.

At a regional meeting with the ASEAN Intellectual Property Offices in Jakarta in September 2004 and based on the outcome of the "EU ASEAN Operational Seminar on the Role of Customs in Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy," which took place in Manila on November 17-21 2003, an agreement was reached to produce a handbook for customs – the **"EC-ASEAN Intellectual Property Rights Cooperation Programme: ECAP II Regional Handbook on IPR for Customs Enforcement."** This guidebook is intended to assist the ASEAN customs authorities in their efforts to comply with their obligations under Part III of the TRIPs Agreement to put into place systems and procedures for the border control of intellectual property rights, and the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Intellectual Property Cooperation of December 15, 1995 (Article 2.2)

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## ASEAN integration: What does it mean for the UK and the Philippines?

**W**e are living in a turbulent period in world affairs. The emergence of new powers means that the international order is in flux, even as economic crises and radical extremism continue to undermine stability in different parts of the world.

Typhoon Yolanda, and, more recently, Seniang, underlined the threats posed by climate change. On top of this, the whole context in which governments conduct foreign policy is being transformed by the connective forces of the Internet and social media, both of which are putting more power into the hands of citizens and the private sector, whether in Britain or in the Philippines.

Diplomatic work, when it is effective, makes a real difference on people's lives. Issues that seem distant can wash up on a person's doorstep.

In this new global environment, we know that Britain's national interests require us to be outward-looking and diplomatically active as never before and our bilateral work with the Philippines is marked by this intensity.

In a region as diverse as Southeast Asia, there is no substitute for a deep understanding of individual nations and relationships.

While Britain is an active member of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and a strong Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) partner, we understand that there can be no one-size-fits-all approach. We are also members of regional groups such as the EU and global institutions like the UN, and these links, when well-used, can be a positive force for good.

Our government will continue to work within the region, both bilaterally and multilaterally, to address our greatest shared challenges – from tackling child abuse through the UK's National Crime Agency to developing science and innovation through our £60m Southeast Asia Newton Fund, and working collaboratively to counter the threat of terrorism.

We want to be a leading partner with the Philippines and other ASEAN countries across the board: in commerce, in culture, education, as well as in foreign policy and security issues.



### THE DIPLOMAT

By **H.E. Asif Ahmad**,  
British Ambassador  
to the Philippines

We understand the immense value of a peaceful, stable Asia with thriving and open economies.

UK exports to the region are increasing 20 percent year on year and we are the largest EU investor here in the Philippines. We also want to see investment flowing the other way.

The UK's economy is the most open to investment in Europe and Philippine businesses are beginning to find their niches – Emperador expanded their global footprint with their purchase of Whyte & Mackay and we see similar great opportunities opening up for other local firms.

Education is one of the pillars of our relations with the ASEAN region. This year we are offering a record 30 Chevening Scholarships for Filipino students to take up post-graduate studies in the UK. More Filipinos will join over 35,000 students from Southeast Asia who attend universities in the UK each year.

According to the QS World University Rankings, half of the top 10 universities in the world are located in the UK. 120,000 British nationals already live in the region, and 2.3 million tourists visit each year, which in turn provides livelihoods for thousands.

The Philippines is part of Southeast Asia's great success stories. The progress will be stronger through reform of government, freer trade, and the rule of law. As we strengthen our ties with countries across Asia, we will inevitably build closer bonds with nations that share our belief that people are happiest when they live in free and open societies with respect for human rights and protection of vulnerable people.

These are categorically not exclusively British values; they are the foundations on which we want to engage with like-minded nations.

It may indeed be a turbulent time in world affairs, but if by working together we succeed in creating a better economic and political environment, the benefits will come to the people of the Philippines and those who have chosen to make this country their current home. ●



# A Distinct Mark of Luxury

*Ayala Land Premier's distinct brand has, over the past decade, allowed it to command premium pricing and enjoy the loyalty of steadfast believers who know what luxury living really is.*

Ayala Land Inc. (ALI) is one of the Philippines' most respected developers and has been instrumental in shaping the country's economic and urban landscapes for many generations. It has diversified into a leading property developer with a full line of real estate products and a strong presence in retail, hotels and resorts, construction, and property management. However, its most distinguishing mark has always been the distinctive communities it has developed under its brand particularly its well-established urban showcases such as the Makati Central Business District and Bonifacio Global City (BGC).

ALI's prime residential arm, Ayala Land Premier (ALP) is a dominant player in its market segment. Its reputation for high standards of construction and maintenance, and excellent locations within ALI's master-planned mixed-use developments has allowed it to continue to command premium pricing despite fierce market competition and saturation.

"ALP buyers are a highly discriminating set who trust the brand and patronize residential projects we roll out," says Ayala Land Premier (ALP) Head, Jose Juan Jugo.

Makati and Bonifacio Global City (BGC) are key estates that are very important to ALP. Demand continues to be high in these areas not only from the local market, but also from the international segment.

"Property values in these two cities are also high, thus investors are keen in owning a piece of property in both fast-rising residential and business

centers developed by ALP. Being the luxury brand in the ALI portfolio, ALP will of course always be present in the most prime locations, especially BGC and Makati," adds Jugo.

## East Gallery Place

ALP understands that to stand out among crowded urban environments or cookie-cutter developments, it has to differentiate itself and justify its premier branding.

"Our growth through the years is a clear testament that we have continued to evolve by introducing pioneering concepts that are well-received," states Jugo. With this in mind, ALP has unveiled East Gallery Place at BGC – a first in terms of offering clients a wider range of innovative configurations.

Everything about East Gallery Place, from its distinctive design to its bespoke features, heralds ALP's confidence in challenging itself to again change the game in luxury real estate. Take for example, the aptly named Flex units, which are free of interior partitions: this allows their occupants to shape them according to their continuously evolving lifestyles.

Likewise, the limited-edition Skysuite, Skycove Aqua, Skyrise and Villa residences all boast expansive layouts and unique, ultra-luxurious amenities.



Two Roxas Triangle's spacious living area

East Gallery Place is also integrated into the High Street South Block, which is envisioned to serve as the city's leading cultural district, featuring a kilometer of street-level signature retail and food options, plus natural and social spaces.

"ALI has placed all its utilities underground. Thus, no unsightly wires are seen, contributing to the overall aesthetic quality of the district and helping command higher property values," adds Jugo.

## Two Roxas Triangle

Ayala Land Inc. has always prided itself as a developer that enhances the communities that host its developments. Take a close look at Makati; from the swampland that it was, it has now transformed to the country's premier financial district – home to five-star hotels, multinational corporations, top banks, headquarters and the biggest retail and global brands with Ayala Malls' Glorietta and Greenbelt.

"We take into account the overall day-to-day living, working, shopping experience of all our stakeholders – be they residents or those simply going to our developments to work or shop," notes Jugo.

Makati is revered to be a safe haven, a preferred location where high-end residential subdivisions and upscale condominiums locate. One Roxas Triangle, in the heart of the Makati central business district, is one prestigious project built by ALP for discerning residents looking for those key factors. Thirteen years since its completion, the iconic tower now stands proudly as one of the country's most esteemed addresses, maintaining among the highest occupancy and lease rates in the city. The project's success also proved how luxury real estate in Metro Manila could be an exceptionally rewarding investment.

ALP realized that one of its grandest triumphs deserved a follow-up. Thus, Two Roxas Triangle is set to rise alongside its illustrious twin. The timing and location couldn't be more fortuitous. The 11,812-sqm Roxas Triangle property leads right into the lush green and prime office spaces of the Ayala Triangle Gardens. Viewed from above, the two triangles form a figure 8—or the infinity symbol, which denotes good fortune. With a maximum of only four units per floor, elevators open directly onto lobbies exclusive to each generously proportioned unit.

When completed, Two Roxas Triangle will offer unparalleled luxury and the utmost comfort and privacy. Truly, a game changer even for ALP's most sophisticated clientele.

Hand in hand with the government,

For more information on Ayala Land Premier, visit [www.ayalalandpremier.com](http://www.ayalalandpremier.com)

## Artist Perspective, East Gallery Place's Skysuite Living and Dining Area





# Wellness is a Family Affair



**A**ccording to the Edelman Health Barometer 2011, nearly half (43%) of respondents believe that their family and friends have the most impact on their lifestyle as it relates to health, and more than a third (36%) believe family and friends have the most impact on personal nutrition.

Like parent, like child. Good health begins at home with families providing a strong foundation for children as they develop habits that may have profound implications on their future health.

Healthy eating and exercise habits can be learned – so it is important for individuals to practice good health habits together as a family.



Taking charge of the family's health also involves preventive health checks. Regular preventive health checks can give you and your family the best possible chance for a longer and healthier life.

*"A preventive health check is one tool the family can use to achieve their wellness goals. Of course, there are other ways like engaging in sports or physical activities, preparing healthy meals, avoiding vices such as smoking, drugs, and alcohol, and educating the kids about the ill effects of these vices," said Dr. Rolando Balburias, director of The Medical City Center for Wellness and Aesthetics (TMC-CWA).*

Dr. Balburias added that making wellness a family affair is actually an investment that can strengthen the security and assure the safety of all its members. He likewise encouraged individuals to have their preventive health checks together as a family to strengthen support, compliance and involvement. Parents should be involved with their children's health and wellness and vice-versa. Dr. Balburias cited one program, Pediatric Weight Management, where parents' participation is vital.

*"In addressing childhood obesity cases, you really have to include the parents because*

*they are the ones who are buying the food; they're the ones influencing what kind of lifestyle their children will have. But if the parents are okay with their children being sedentary, eating junk foods, then illness, instead of wellness, becomes a family affair,"* said Dr. Balburias.

He stressed that wellness should be a top priority in the household. The family can be likened to the human body. If one part of the body hurts, the rest of the body is affected, thereby weakening the entire system. Similarly, when one family member gets sick, it affects the whole family in various ways – physically, financially, mentally, emotionally or spiritually.

When wellness becomes a family affair, wellness goals become more achievable or attainable. Adhering to a healthy lifestyle becomes a way of life. This is more effective with guaranteed lifelong results as compared to quick fixes to health problems.

Going to a one-stop shop like The Medical City's Center for Wellness and Aesthetics for the entire family's preventive health check is more advisable because it's convenient and saves a lot of time and effort.

TMC-CWA offers services and preventive health checks for different age groups. The Center houses four clinics that address the needs of children, adolescents, adults and geriatrics.

Doctors who attend to patients belonging to different age groups can be provided by the Center. Members of the family can have their preventive health checks at least once a year.

Instead of having the usual health checks, Dr. Balburias says each member of the family should opt to avail of a personalized preventive health check package, one that is tailor-made to the specific needs of the individual.

TMC-CWA offers Customized, Optimized, Personalized (COP) preventive health check packages which are more relevant and cost-efficient. This is made possible through health profiling – a value-added service of TMC-CWA aimed at giving patients a better understanding of their own health status.

Through health profiling, previous results and health check reports of each patient are retrieved, collated, tabulated and reviewed in detail by the Center's Wellness physicians in order to show trends and emphasize health concerns that need to be addressed.

*"With the basic annual health checks, the tests are always the same. Sometimes, there are more important things that you may miss. These tests are somewhat limited so it would be better if the health check package is customized,"* said Dr. Balburias.

With preventive health checks, cost of treatment is less because diseases are detected while still in the reversible phase or before complications arise.

There is much wisdom in the old statement: health really is wealth.

Making health a priority will bring invaluable wealth to individuals and their families for generations to come.



*For more information on preventive health check packages, please call The Medical City Center for Wellness and Aesthetics at tel. nos. (632) 988-1000 / (632) 988-7000 ext. 6576 / 6579.*



# Philanthropy soars to new heights

Yap Mun Ching talks about corporate philanthropy in the age of integration

The progressive integration of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) towards the formation of the ASEAN Community 2015 has created numerous business opportunities over the last two decades.

However, a far less explored area of opportunity has been in the field of philanthropy.

When AirAsia Foundation was established in 2012, our vision was to become a corporate foundation that would chart new ground in ASEAN-wide philanthropy.

To reflect the AirAsia identity as an ASEAN airline, we decided to focus on supporting social enterprises in the region as our way of helping underprivileged communities.

We started by appointing a Council of Trustees comprising prominent business and community leaders from different ASEAN countries. Then, we tapped into local relationships to select our first grantees. Two years after our first award to a Cambodian organization, we are proud to say that we have been able to assist eight social enterprises in six ASEAN countries.

Working at an ASEAN level has its rewards and challenges.

To start with the challenges: each country has its own set of philanthropy laws and incentives which makes it difficult for a

small corporate foundation to maneuver. Unless we register branch offices in all 10 ASEAN countries, we cannot offer our donors any tax relief. This limits our fundraising capabilities and our growth potential.

Next are communication and infrastructural barriers. Although English is the working language of ASEAN, this is not always applicable to small social enterprises. We have been able to address this partly by working with local social enterprise intermediaries but as social enterprise is still a new concept in many countries, such intermediaries are not always available.

These challenges aside, the rewards of working at an ASEAN level are tremendous. Here are just two examples drawing on our work in the Philippines:

In July 2013, we awarded a grant to award-winning social enterprise, Rags2Riches, Inc. (R2R). R2R was already an established business but our collaboration enabled AirAsia Foundation to support their expansion while borrowing their experience to explain the concept of social enterprise to organizations seeking to develop their own models. We were also able to pilot a new initiative to sell R2R's ethically made products on board AirAsia's flights. This extended our assistance toolkit from providing financial support to include business advisory and new market access.

Secondly, having an ASEAN focus enabled us to step up when the situation called for an extraordinary regional response. Following Typhoon Haiyan in November 2013, AirAsia Foundation coordinated a group effort to collect donations on all flights across the entire AirAsia network. It was our first ever effort of this magnitude and in six weeks, we raised over \$1million which the AirAsia Group matched dollar-for-dollar.

We received donations from people from 75 countries but most of all from ASEAN citizens who wanted to do their part for the survivors of the devastating storm. The funds were distributed to four organizations to rebuild homes and livelihood, one of which was R2R for an innovative program combining art therapy and skills training for survivors to join their artisans' network.

The wholehearted response of the people of ASEAN to this campaign clearly shows



the potential for more effective region-wide philanthropy. And so, with the ASEAN Economic Community becoming a reality this year, we invite many more philanthropic organizations to join us in creating an ecosystem that would generate stronger ASEAN ties, not only in business, but also in the business of doing good. ●

**Yap Mun Ching** is the Executive Director of AirAsia Foundation. She first joined AirAsia in 2004 and last held the position of Head of Strategic Planning responsible for the group's fleet planning, route development and scheduling portfolios, before moving into the field of corporate philanthropy.

A Weekend  
of Everything  
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It's more FUN  
FLYING in the  
Philippines

Feb 12-15, 2015  
at Clark Field  
Pampanga

19th PHILIPPINE INTERNATIONAL  
hotair  
BALLOON FIESTA





# ASEAN grapples with energy security

Energy issues among most pressing in the Philippines

**W**ith a combined Gross Domestic Product of \$2.1 trillion in 2011, a wealth of natural resources and an enterprising and increasingly well-educated workforce, the 10 member states that make up the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) possess the necessary assets to become a pillar of the global structure.

The world's most powerful economies are focusing increasingly on ASEAN's excellent performance and growth potential. There is one important and critical question coming up: Can developing ASEAN secure the energy it needs to fuel the expected economic expansion?

Energy security rests on three pillars: the adequacy and reliability of energy supply, environmental sustainability, and affordable access. Failure on any of these fronts could derail economic development and the desired inclusive growth.

ASEAN has an array of options to manage its energy appetite. But tackling issues such as outmoded subsidies requires political will, and green innovation requires imagination.

Subsidies impose a tremendous burden on public budgets, exceeding 2 percent of GDP in Indonesia and Vietnam and are undermining the desired level playing field as ASEAN integrates. In this context, it is unfortunate that we see a looming power crisis in the Philippines starting in summer 2015 and stretching into 2016.

The private sector has offered solutions to the Department of Energy and is committed to address the shortfall jointly, by focusing on the following measures:

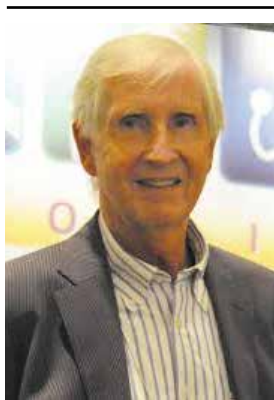
**1. Energy efficiency needs to be implemented and enforced NOW.**

Available data say that as much as 20 percent of power can be saved if everybody embarks on Energy Efficiency. Given 11,500 megawatts (MW), this equals 2,300MW. This is far beyond the estimated shortfall of 400MW–800MW.

**2. Mobilization of self-generating capacity of large end users / Interruptible Load Program (ILP)**

The private sector is accumulating data on the ILP by convincing companies with large embedded generation plants to run for 10 hours a day during the shortfall. It is expected that 700MW can be made available.

**3. Power price caps in the spot market should be abolished because they are a disincentive to energy generation investments.**



## From The Desk

By **Henry Schumacher**,  
VP for External  
Affairs, European  
Chamber of  
Commerce  
of the Philippines

Investors will only invest if there is a fair return on investment possible which is, at the moment, undermined by the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM) cap.

**4. The approval process for generating new plants should be streamlined.**

Approximately 162 permits and signatures are required before a power plant can be built—this means, in the Philippines it takes five years to get a plant on stream compared with three years in other countries.

**5. The government should develop a sustainable energy mix policy and Feed in Tariff (FIT) implementation.**

In order to drive investments and look at sustainable feedstock, the government has to create a long-term vision on the energy mix, looking at coal, liquefied natural gas, geothermal and renewable energy sources.

**6. The government should fast-track the tender for banked gas.** By 2016, Malampaya will have additional gas available to power a 200MW plant. The Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC) owns banked gas enough to power another 200MW.

Why is the private sector keen to cooperate with the government to solve the power crisis? We have had experience with previous governments buying expensive power off the rack, which further burdens power consumers and is a disincentive for new investments the country badly needs.

And this potential power crisis happens close to the time when the ASEAN Economic Community kicks in. There are three key areas of focus for ASEAN members: trade in goods, trade in services and inward investment or foreign direct investments (FDI).

FDI is a key component of resource flows to ASEAN countries. Over the last decade, FDI flows into ASEAN members grew at an annual average rate of 19 percent.

Within the overall framework, each ASEAN country has adopted its own strategy to attract FDI. As in the European Union (EU), efforts to create a “level playing field” between the countries in the single market leaves national governments with freedom to provide their own tax and other incentives to investors.

Internationally, there is plenty of interest to invest in the energy future of the Philippines. Managing demand growth while aggressively exploring cleaner supply options must be part of the joint vision. ●

## ASEAN economic

From page 4

A medium-term cooperation program in the field of IPRs for 2004-2006 between ASEAN and the United States Patent and Trademark Office has been adopted.

**What are the goals of the AEC regarding IP and IPR?**

The AEC intends to achieve the following by 2015:

- Fully implement the ASEAN IPR Action Plan 2004-2010, and the Work Plan for ASEAN Cooperation on Copyrights
- Establish an ASEAN filing system for design to facilitate filings by users and promote coordination among the IP Offices in ASEAN member countries, as receiving office, contingent upon the language requirements
- Accession to the Madrid Protocol, where possible
- Sustain consultations and information exchanges among national enforcement agencies in IPR protection
- Promote regional cooperation on Traditional Knowledge (TK), Genetic Resources (GR) and Cultural Traditional Expressions (CTE).

**What are the expected outcomes of AEC's**

The foregoing actions are expected to result to the following:

- Effective use of the copyright system
- Establishment of collective management societies in all ASEAN countries
- An improved ASEAN Business Development Services (BDS) network
- Implementation of the ASEAN filing

- system for design
- Implementation of the Madrid Protocol
- Establishment of national and regional database on TK, GR and CTE.

**What are the developments in the regional cooperation in IPR after the ASEAN adopted the AEC Blueprint?**

The ASEAN Working Group on Intellectual Property Cooperation (AWGIPC), which was established in 1996 pursuant to the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Intellectual Property Cooperation, prepared a new work plan building on the IPR Action Plan, 2004-2010, the Work Plan on Copyrights, and the Work Plan under the AEC Blueprint in order to develop an ASEAN IP System. This new work plan is the ASEAN IPR Action Plan 2011-2015, which is designed to meet the goals of the AEC by transforming ASEAN into an innovative and competitive region through the use of IP for their nationals and ensuring that the region remains an active player in the international IP community.

ASEAN continues its active cooperation in the IP sector with the Dialogue Partners, donor countries and agencies and private sector organizations – including the ASEAN Intellectual Property Association, the International Trademark Association, Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (OHIM), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Australia, EU, and Japan Patent Office.

**What are the initiatives that the Philippines is required to lead under the ASEAN IPR Action Plan 2011-2015?**

The Philippines should lead the following initiatives under the ASEAN IPR Action Plan 2011-2015:

- Reduction of average turnaround time (from filing to registration) for the registration of trademarks without objections/opposition to 6 months by 2015 (with Cambodia);
- Capacity building for industrial design and trademark professionals/attorneys;
- Development and implementation of a Regional Action Plan on IPR Enforcement;
- Accession to Protocol Relating to the Madrid Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Marks by 2015;
- Accession to the Hague Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Industrial Designs by at least seven ASEAN Member States (AMS) by 2015;
- Establishment of a regional network of patent libraries within schools and universities in AMSs to increase access to global scientific and technology information for research and development;
- Capacity building for industrial design and trademark examiners; and
- Infrastructure Modernization of ASEAN IP Offices (with Vietnam).

**What are the developments in the regional cooperation in trademarks under the AEC Blueprint?**

The Experts Group on Trademark has finalized the ASEAN Filing Form for Trademarks and the Notes for the Completion of the Application. These achievements, together with the completed ASEAN Common Form and the consolidated ASEAN list of ethnic goods and services, represent important steps forward in the regional cooperation in IP. Despite its inherent complexities, member countries have

continued their efforts in the harmonization of the trademark filing requirements. This is a process of significant importance towards the establishment of a regional filing system.

**What are the developments in the regional cooperation in patents under the AEC Blueprint?**

The Experts Group on Patents continues to examine the many substantive differences in design laws and procedures that need harmonization in ASEAN. The deliberations of the Expert Group have been greatly assisted by various detailed consultations with private sector organizations as well as the experiences of the European Community Design (CD) system in the EU.

**What are the developments in the regional cooperation in copyright under the AEC Blueprint?**

Collaboration among member countries is now extended to copyright and related rights, and preparatory work on a cooperation program in this regard has been initiated. Member countries have also made substantive progress in ensuring the conformance of their IP legislations to the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement. ●

**Atty. Ramon S. Esguerra** is the Managing Partner at Esguerra & Blanco Law Offices. He is also Chairman of the Board of the Intellectual Property Association of the Philippines and Councilor of the Asian Patent Attorneys Association.

The FAQs above are the sole opinion of the writer and should not constitute as legal opinion or advice. – **The IMMIGRANT**



# Azkals hopeful even after defeats

**A**lthough last year saw the Azkals perform with some distinction, it has more often than not been a case of so-near-and-yet-so-far, with pain punctuating every success, and the Philippines' national football team repeatedly falling at the final hurdle and dropping three places in the Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) rankings.

The Azkals took part in the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Challenge Cup in Maldives in May, came top of their group (containing Afghanistan, Turkmenistan, and Laos), defeated the hosts 3-2 after extra time in the semi-final, only to then narrowly lose in the final 1-0 to Palestine, and thus lose out on the berth to the 2015 AFC Asian Cup awarded to the winners.

Despite this being their best ever finish in this competition, they came across a determined Palestine who was not only typically resolute and miserly in defense, but who also controlled the game and created more chances.

They then hosted the Philippine Peace Cup, beating Chinese Taipei 5-1 to reach the final, when, with seconds to go, 2-1 up and about to clinch their third successive Peace Cup title, they saw Myanmar, who they had beaten in their previous two meetings, equalize in stoppage time, going on to win the game 3-2. The Azkals then endured watching the Burmese celebrate their victory in front of their Filipino fans.

Finally, the end of the year saw the much-anticipated ASEAN Football Federation (AFF) Suzuki Cup and the national team went into the competition with high hopes and full confidence after solid wins in friendly games against Cambodia, Nepal, and Papua New Guinea.

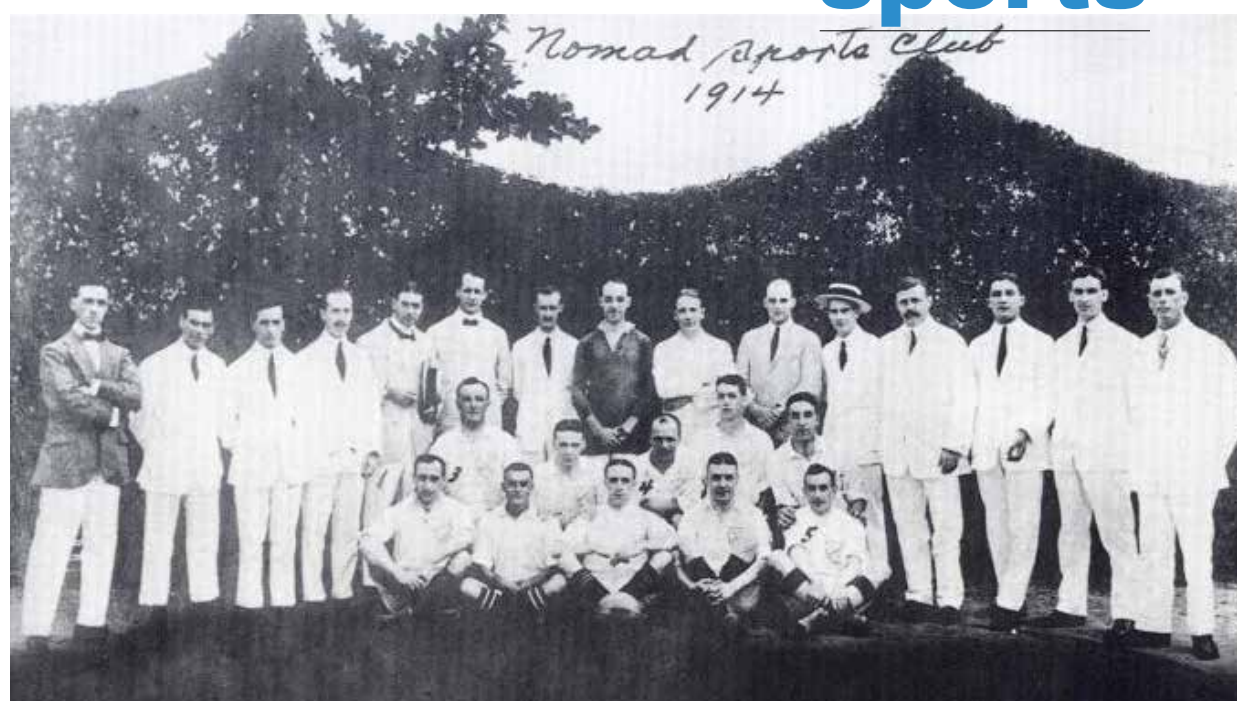
Strong performances in the first two games against Laos and Indonesia saw them come out convincing winners, 4-1 and 4-0 respectively, and gave the nation belief. Even a loss against perennial powerhouse Vietnam in the final game did nothing to dampen expectations going into the semi-final against the other Southeast Asian giant, Thailand.

The first leg in Manila saw the home side etch out a competitive goalless draw, fueling the optimism which swept across the country, but the second leg back in Thailand brought everybody back down to earth with the Thai War Elephants handing out a football lesson with a crushing 3-0 defeat.

Still, the Azkals left the tournament with their heads held high, looking forward to the upcoming FIFA World Cup qualifiers in the summer of 2015.

"Overall, I am happy with the way we played and the results we had in the tournament," said team manager Thomas Dooley. "After 80 years, we won against Indonesia - it was an outstanding result and maybe the best game we played this year. And then we played Thailand at home and came away with a 0-0 draw. I can say we [went] back home with our heads held high." ●

***"The Azkals left the AFF Suzuki Cup with their heads held high, looking forward to the upcoming FIFA World Cup qualifiers in the summer of 2015."***



# Pioneer PH football club seeks new path

Dimitris Lyritzis talks about the Nomads' changing fortunes

**T**here will be a small but significant anomaly in the upcoming season of the United Football League (UFL) – the Nomad Sports Club, which is the oldest football club in the Philippines, will not be fielding a side for the first time in its long history.

And what a colorful history it has.

The UFL, slowly taking on a strong Filipino hue with its recent foreigner-cap rule and growing in size with more and more sponsorship money coming in every year, owes its genesis to a bunch of football-mad expats wanting a kick-about over 100 years ago, and its formation to those expats' descendants looking for the same thing.

It all started in the late 1880s with the establishment of the Manila Club, a good old-fashioned gentlemen's aristocratic country club where the British could get together, reminisce, share a drink, and indulge in their favorite sports.

There are unofficial reports of football and cricket being played by its members from as far back as 1895, when stray balls from both sports would often end up in the river beside the green, and the first official, albeit very informal, football league, consisting of a mere handful of expat clubs, was formed around 1907 or 1908.

Here is where the history becomes a little hazy.

The year 1914 is the official birth of Nomads Sports Club, and there was even a huge extravaganza of a centenary celebration just before Christmas 2014 to prove it, although it would appear that it's probably just the year that the team played under its new name (and won the league), or the year that the league was formerly recognized by Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), or maybe it has no significance at all apart from that it's the first picture of the team and the board members which is labeled as Nomads Sports Club as opposed to Manila Club.

The years passed by without too much incident, apart from the club, in true Nomadic style, moved around in search of the perfect location, and its members continued to play football on a casual basis until recently, when the club who introduced

football to the Philippines once again played a big part in football's development in this country.

Throughout the 1990s, football in Manila was played out (apart from one failed attempt to unify the league in 1997) in three distinctly different groups: the Armed Forces had their own league, the universities played among themselves, and the handful of expat makeshift teams all played each other on an ad hoc basis.

Then, in 2002, ex-Nomad keeper Darryll Orchard decided to include local teams in the expat league (Kaya and Loyola were among the first), changed the name to United Football League, formed a committee of expats to run

it, and created a proper format for the competition. The league took tentative roots and started sprouting.

In 2009, at the same time as the Azkals were stepping it up and bringing in players from abroad, the Football Alliance came in and offered to take it to the next level, bringing with them sponsors, TV rights, and grand ideas of bringing more clubs into the fold.

The "founding fathers" were only too glad to pass the entire entity over, and the UFL, as we know it today, was up and running.

In 2011, the league was split into two divisions, and Nomads, after finishing 7th and 8th in the top division in the last two seasons, were, ironically, then obliged to self-relegate at the beginning of the 2014 season due to failure to comply with the league's foreign player cap rule.

And now, sadly, the club has taken the unprecedented step of not entering a team in the league for the upcoming season in recognition of the fact that it is not in a position to compete with the now ultra-professional nature of the league, especially since it has yet to find a sponsor.

The club has, over the years, morphed into something far more wide-ranging, the emphasis now being given to youth development with both eyes set firmly on the future, but let's hope that the club which introduced the game to the Philippines in the late 19th century, and then set up the first official league over 100 years later, regroup and remains a part of the future of football in this country for a very long time. ●





# Capable contenders

Michael Fernando looks at SUVs for every need

As the Philippines’ peak typhoon season makes its presence felt with more frequent cyclones and heavy rainfall, so too does the demand for capable means of transport. Owing to the potholed streets, frequent flooding and rising cost of fuel, sports utility vehicles (SUVs) have, not surprisingly, led the sales charts of various car companies as the choice vehicle of many.

They come in various forms these days, from the rugged, and conventional pickup ladder frame-based designs to the more modern “crossovers” built over passenger car platforms. A more recent development is the B-segment SUV, boasting even more compact size with the comfort and maneuverability of a city car.

**Chevrolet Trailblazer**

Among the top choices for the conventional pickup ladder frame-based SUVs is the Chevrolet Trailblazer.

Derived from the Colorado pickup, it boasts of the same high ground clearance, part-time and full-time 4x4 as well as potent power from the 2.8-liter common rail turbo diesel engine. Gone are the days of fishing for the second stick shift, as engaging the 4x4 low ratio simply entails twisting a knob by the automatic stick shift.

Navigating tricky terrain is made easy thanks to the built-in Hill Descent and

Traction Control that automatically regulates the speed and power delivered to each individual wheel. Speaking of power, there’s plenty of it, thanks to the 200 hp produced by the engine, even at low revs, sped along by the variable geometry turbo.

Besides the rugged ability, what helps the Trailblazer stand out in this competitive segment is its comfort and safety features. The driver is spoiled by remote controls for the stereo and cruise control mounted right on the steering wheel.

For entertainment, the system easily links to any modern MP3 player or cell phone. An optional touchscreen with GPS navigation can be secured. Finally, it seats seven passengers, yet this number may vary thanks to the configurable interior, allowing for the loading of bulky items.

**Mazda CX-5**

Those who want a more sporting drive with the practicality of a larger car should look into the Mazda CX-5. A perfect example of a crossover SUV, this vehicle is derived from a car platform with the option of being front-wheel drive or all-wheel drive.

A choice of either a 2.0-liter or 2.5-liter inline four can propel it forward. Consumption is hardly a worry, either, as a built-in ECO mode automatically shuts off the engine at stoplights to conserve fuel.

Simply step on the throttle and it starts up again.

The CX-5 returns a taut ride, yet agile and stable handling, which easily masks just how rapidly it can make progress. Despite its SUV form, it stays just as true to Mazda’s Zoom Zoom mantra as any other sporty sedan the brand has on offer.

When the road gets rough, there’s no need to fiddle with any 4x4 knobs as built-in sensors within the wheels determine where and when power is needed for the wheels.

The interior is swathed in leather, and illuminated by the cool red glow of the instruments and displays. It also has a flexible second row, along with wipers and headlights with rain and dusk sensors that activate them for you.

**Ford EcoSport**

Finally, we come to the smallest, but by no means the least of the SUVs on offer. The EcoSport is a derivative of the popular Fiesta city runabout.

Designed with Asian cities in mind, the vehicle pairs high water-wading capability with compact size and maneuverability. This

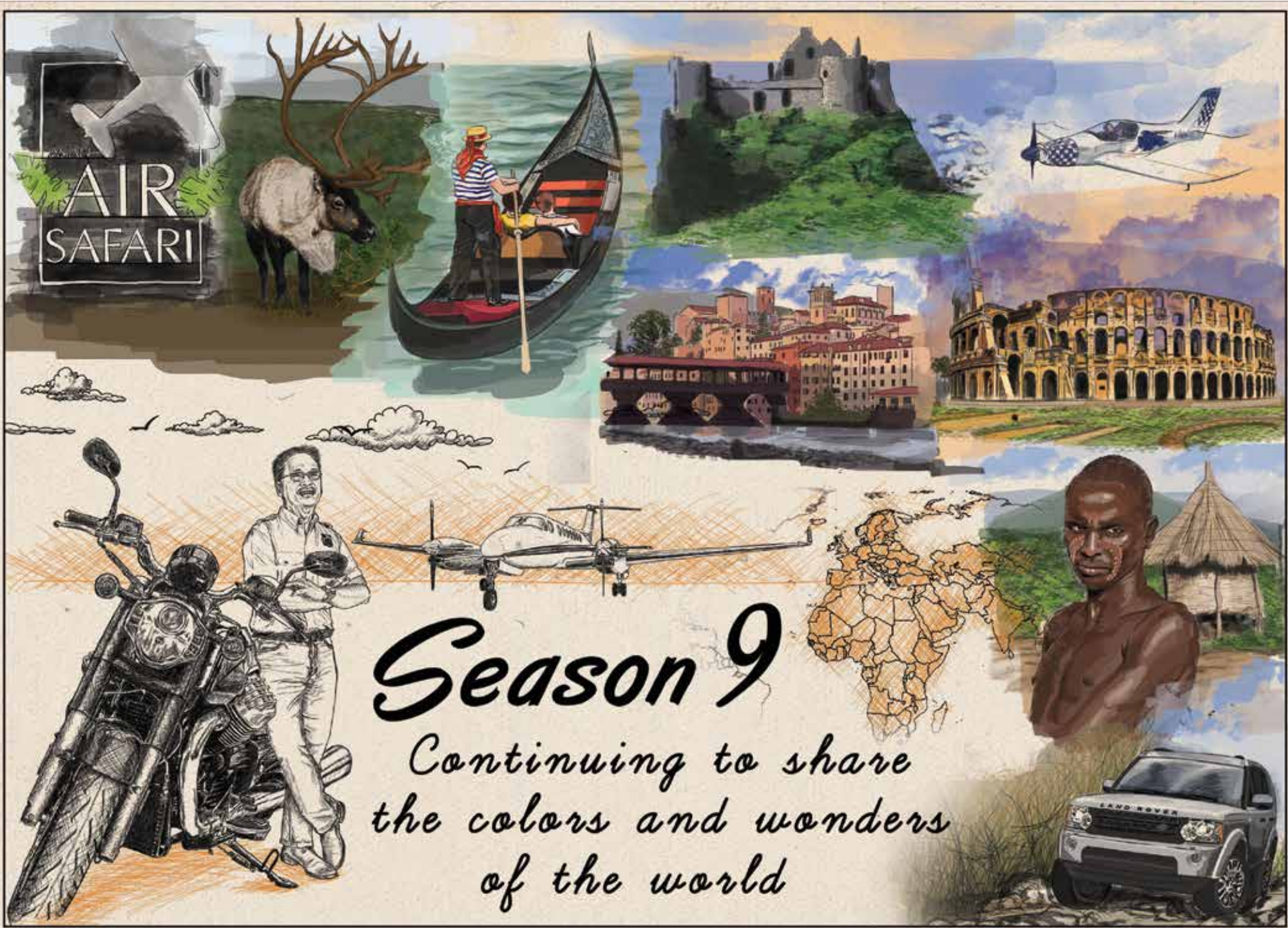


Mazda CX-5

car features clever touches all over, from the hidden handle of the side-swinging tailgate, to its built-in Ford Sync entertainment system that can change stations, call your cell phone contacts, or adjust the climate all by voice command.

The bright choice of colors and modern interior and exterior design reflect Ecosport’s more youthful target market. Plastic may be the predominant interior material, though the Ecosport’s ruggedness and durability more than make up for it. A diminutive 1.5 liter inline 4-cylinder propels it along with the much more potent 1.0-liter EcoBoost engine coming soon.

From large to small, rugged to city-bound, there’s likely something to love among the three choice models. They’re the epitome of how far the SUV has come from its simpler beginning, and they also give a glimpse of where it is definitely headed, with you along for the ride. ●



# Season 9

Continuing to share the colors and wonders of the world



# Excellent Reasons to Retire in the Philippines



It is definitely "More **fun** in the Philippines!" Enjoy Filipino dishes like adobo, sinigang, kare-kare, pinakbet, bicol express, and the freshest sea food dishes you can imagine. Experience the country's most popular festivals like Cebu City's Sinulog, Aklan's Ati-Atihan, Iloilo's Dinagyang, Baguio's Panagbenga Flower Festival, Davao's Kadayawan, Bohol's Sandugo; and islands like Palawan, Panglao, Boracay, Caramoan, Camiguin, and Coron.

Shop in the some of the world's largest malls like Mall of Asia, SM Aura, Megamall, Greenbelt, Glorietta, Shangri-la, Rockwell, Greenhills Center, Robinson's Galleria, Robinson's Magnolia among others. Enjoy world-class casinos and gaming venues like Casino Filipino, Solaire Resort & Casino, and Resorts World Manila.

The **cost of living** in the Philippines is much cheaper. No doubt about this. And think of the many business opportunities.

The Philippines has **world-class healthcare**. We have JCI-accredited hospitals like St. Luke's, Medical City, Makati Medical Center, Asian Hospital, and Chong Hua. We also have locally accredited quality and affordable hospitals like Cardinal Santos, University of the East Medical Center, Lorma Medical Center, University of Santo Tomas Hospital, Manila Doctors, Medical Center Manila, Far Eastern University Hospital, Cebu Doctors, and Chinese General Hospital, and leading government hospitals like the Philippine General Hospital, Philippine Heart Center, the Lung Center of the Philippines, Philippine Children's Medical Center, and the National Kidney and Transplant Institute, among others.

The Philippines also has quality health insurance and health maintenance organizations,

such as the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, Maxicare, Philcare, and Medicaard. International health insurance coverage by providers such as Van Breda, Aetna, United Healthcare, Carefirst, Humana, Molina Healthcare, Blue Cross, TriCare Kaiser International is accepted in Philippine hospitals.

The cost of co-pay in the US may be practically equal to the cost of the whole medical procedure in the Philippines.

The emergence of independent physician associations such as United Physician International, Inc. will help make Medicare benefits portable to the Philippines. Third party administrators and other facilitators are providing more mechanisms for Medicare portability.

Aggressive lobbying by groups (such as US Medicare PH) identified with the Philippines and Latin American countries is bringing the passage of a bill making Medicare portable to countries like the Philippines and Mexico more and more likely. Furthermore, more policy studies by an increasing number of respectable research groups are providing the metrics to justify health outsourcing and retirement migration.

It is easy to integrate with Filipinos. English is very widely spoken. Signages and instructions are in English, and daily newspapers are in English. There is freedom of expression, and as PRA retiree-member Jon Stewart would say:

*"One of the reasons my family and I choose to live in the Philippines is that the people are warm, kind and reliable. We are happy to make our home here among such people."*

Many localities see and promote their towns and cities as **RADAR (Retirement Areas Deemed as Retiree-friendly)**: Makati, Quezon City, Cebu City, Talisay City, Liloan, Cadiz, Bacolod, Dumaguete, Victorias, Baguio, Tagaytay, Davao City, Zamboanga City. Also economic zones like Subic, Clark and Zamboanga.

Retirement facility projects include:

- Cebu SRP Project to host cutting-edge and largest retirement-related facility with 1.25 hectares, 3 buildings, 800 units;
- Tagaytay offers a unique project with best of wellness and best of retirement. La Bella in Tagaytay is an intergenerational project consisting of a condotel for visiting relatives of retirees and residential condos for retirees. Wellness packages are included in the purchase of the units;
- Mactan Newtown Township is in a fast-expanding mode. The first cluster consisting of four buildings is moving towards the finishing stage, as Megaworld has expanded the project from the Lapu-Lapu Shrine to the beach thru the acquisition of Portofino beach.
- LifeCare Residences Cebu has tied up with the Manosa Group of Architect Manosa to develop a 2-hectare retirement facility in Cebu.
- Oroland in Bacolod is an international-oriented, green, intergenerational community with access to metropolitan amenities.

Last but not least, the retiree has visa options depending on his situation: dual citizenship, 13A (for those married to Filipinos), and PRA's **Special Resident Retiree's Visa (SRRV)**.

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