- Electronic commerce (e-commerce)

Phl to link digital payments system with Singapore, Thailand

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The Philippines is set to link its digital payment system with those of other member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) continues to roll out the National Retail Payments System (NRPS).

BSP Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. said the regulator is now looking at how to connect the country's e-payment system with that of Singapore and Thailand after launching

"The more interesting prospect, potentially, is to link up the instant payment networks regionally. I learned that Singapore and Thailand is already conducting a pilot test," Espenilla said.

Both Singapore and Thailand are connecting their national digital payment system through an unprecedented regional alliance. The alliance would bring together Southeast Asia's first national digital payment platforms.

Singapore has PayNow while Thailand has PromptPay. Cash remains the dominant mode of payment in much of the region.

Last April 23, the BSP launched another automated clearing house dubbed InstaPay allowing 24/7 low value electronic fund transfers below P50,000.

"InstaPay will be accessible 24/7, all year round through mobile apps and internet banking facilities provided by participating banks and e-money issuers, with other e-channels following soon," he said.

The new platform eliminates the need to go through the trouble of physically travelling and transacting at bank branches or payments counters.

"This is basically very young, but as it matures it could be possible to interface with other countries. What you can do in the Philippines you can do it cross border, at least in ASEAN. So those are the big possibilities here," the BSP chief said.

Via InstaPay, Filipinos can start enjoying safe and affordable electronic retail payments in real-time.

The BSP launched the first automated clearing house last Nov. 8 allowing batch electronic fund transfer under the NRPS called Philippine EFT System and Operations Network (PESONet) that facilitates fund transfer from one account to one or several accounts maintained in different financial institutions.

The NRPS aims to establish a safe, efficient, affordable, and reliable electronic retail payments system in the country, with an increase in the share of electronic retail payments to at least 20 percent by 2020 from the current level of one percent.