

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,621.88 ▲ 38.41 PTS. ▲ 0.58%

TUESDAY, JANUARY 23, 2024  
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PSEI MEMBER STOCKS

<b>AC</b> Ayala Corp. P683.50 -P7.50 -1.09%	<b>ACEN</b> ACEN Corp. P4.14 +P0.07 +1.72%	<b>AEV</b> Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P48.75 -P0.25 -0.51%	<b>AGI</b> Alliance Global Group, Inc. P11.60 ---	<b>ALI</b> Ayala Land, Inc. P34.30 +P0.95 +2.85%	<b>BDO</b> BDO Unibank, Inc. P142.00 +P1.40 +1%	<b>BLOOM</b> Blossberry Resorts Corp. P10.44 +P0.18 +1.75%	<b>BPI</b> Bank of the Philippine Islands P107.60 +P1.10 +1.03%	<b>CNPF</b> Century Pacific Food, Inc. P34.25 -P0.55 -1.58%	<b>CNVRG</b> Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P8.68 -P0.16 -1.81%
<b>DMC</b> DMCI Holdings, Inc. P10.50 +P0.08 +0.77%	<b>EMI</b> Emperador, Inc. P20.95 -P0.05 -0.24%	<b>GLO</b> Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,750.00 ---	<b>GTCAP</b> GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P641.00 -P1.00 -0.16%	<b>ICT</b> International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P243.40 +P2.40 +1%	<b>JFC</b> Jollibee Foods Corp. P263.00 +P3.20 +1.23%	<b>JGS</b> JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P39.10 +P0.15 +0.39%	<b>LTG</b> LT Group, Inc. P9.10 ---	<b>MBT</b> Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P58.00 +P1.10 +1.93%	<b>MER</b> Manila Electric Co. P383.40 -P1.60 -0.42%
<b>MONDE</b> Monde Nissin Corp. P8.55 +P0.25 +3.01%	<b>NIKL</b> Nickel Asia Corp. P4.87 -P0.01 -0.2%	<b>PGOLD</b> Puregold Price Club, Inc. P28.75 +P0.10 +0.35%	<b>SCC</b> Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P31.80 +P0.30 +0.95%	<b>SM</b> SM Investments Corp. P890.00 +P7.00 +0.79%	<b>SMC</b> San Miguel Corp. P116.50 -P1.50 -1.27%	<b>SMPH</b> SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P33.05 +P0.05 +0.15%	<b>TEL</b> PLDT Inc. P1,290.00 -P6.00 -0.46%	<b>URC</b> Universal Robina Corp. P112.40 -P1.10 -0.97%	<b>WLCON</b> Wilcon Depot, Inc. P22.00 ---

# Renewable energy projects rose by 26% in 2023 — DoE

RENEWABLE energy (RE) commercial projects with awarded service contracts increased by 26% in 2023, led by solar technology, according to the Department of Energy (DoE).

Data from the DoE released on Tuesday showed that RE projects totaled 1,220 last year with a potential capacity of 134,813.79 megawatts (MW), higher than the 965 recorded in 2022 with a capacity of 80,396.61 MW.

Of the total, there are 434 solar projects in the country with 28,913.78 MW potential capacity. This was followed by 428 hydropower projects with 18,902.96 MW and 252 wind power projects with 85,692.964 MW.

There are also 58 biomass projects with 206.88 MW; 39 geothermal projects with 1,063.20 MW; and nine ocean energy projects with 34 MW.

Terry L. Ridon, a public investment analyst and convener of think tank InfraWatch PH, attributed the increase in RE projects to a “better business climate under the current administration, the commitment of the Energy department to a better energy mix in the medium-term, and the relatively lower costs of building RE facilities compared to legacy facilities like coal and gas plants.”

“This is a step in the right direction as this significantly contributes to our climate commitments, and balances our reliance on coal and gas technologies,” he said in a Viber message.



He added that this momentum towards RE should prompt the government to further streamline permitting processes, particularly in local government units, to expedite the establishment of RE facilities.

As of the end of 2022, RE accounted for about 22% of the Philippines’ energy mix, with coal-fired power plants providing nearly 60%.

Looking ahead, the government aims to increase the share of renewables to 35% by 2030 and 50% by 2040. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

Rates, from SI/1

For 2023, inflation averaged 6%, slightly higher than 5.8% in 2022. This marked the second straight year that inflation breached the BSP’s 2-4% target.

Security Bank Corp. Chief Economist Robert Dan J. Roces said that despite base effects, inflation might remain elevated in the coming months due to external risks.

“The BSP will (and should) maintain a tight monetary policy stance in the medium term to stabilize prices,” he said.

He added that El Niño could lead to droughts and agricultural price hikes, which could push up inflation. Disruptions in the Red Sea may also increase import costs.

However, a weaker global demand could lead to lower commodity prices and dampen domestic demand. An improvement in the supply chain might also drive input costs lower, which could put a downward pressure on inflation, Mr. Roces added.

CHINA SLOWDOWN

The projected economic slowdown in China could dampen the Philippines’ growth outlook this year, according to Mr. Remolona.

“I’m more optimistic about the Philippine economy, but less about the global (economy),” he said.

“China is a concern... It looks like a long slowdown, not a temporary slowdown,” he said, adding that market players now see the Chinese economy expanding by about 5% in 2023 from earlier projections of 10%.

Mr. Remolona noted that China is one of the Philippines’ major trading partners and a good source of investments.

The Philippines should diversify its trade and investment partners, he added.

Mr. Roces said a slowing Chinese economy could impact the economy via trade, investments and tourism. The Philippines in-needs diversification strategies to mitigate its impact.

Poverty, from SI/1

To further reduce poverty, Ms. Edillon said the government must “grow the economic pie.”

“We’re talking about economic growth, income growth, especially of the poor, and then you need to make sure that the poor can participate and benefit from that growth process,” she said.

The government is targeting 6.5-7.5% gross domestic product (GDP) growth this year.

“You also need to make sure that those sectors that will grow can actually employ the poor and the vulnerable sectors. And then of course, very important as well is to make sure that you have the safety nets, so that when shocks come then they will not slide back into poverty,” Ms. Edillon added.

She noted the need to prioritize the agriculture sector in particular, because it is one of the more vulnerable sectors.

“It will still be the agricultural sector that remains vulnerable to weather shocks and even incidents of pests and diseases. We really need to make sure that we increase the resiliency of the sector,” the NEDA official said, citing

“Reduced demand for Philippine exports, especially electronics, garments and agricultural products would shrink the country’s economic pie. This slowdown could also disrupt supply chains, causing production bottlenecks and price hikes across various industries,” he said.

Based on data from the local statistics agency, the United States was the top destination of locally made products in November with a 16% share worth \$1.14 billion. It was followed by Japan (13.2% share worth \$938.3 million) and China (12.3% share valued at \$876.27 million).

Meanwhile, China remained the Philippines’ main source of imported goods with a value of \$2.6 billion, accounting for 24% of the total.

“A potential decrease in Chinese foreign direct investment (FDI), which is crucial for infrastructure and tourism, could hamper economic growth and job creation. Capital flight from the region due to the slowdown might weaken the peso, further boosting import costs and fueling inflation,” Mr. Roces said.

Central bank data showed FDI inflows from China fell by 19.1% to \$12.53 million as of October 2023 from \$15.49 million a year ago.

Meanwhile, fewer Chinese tourists visiting the Philippines would affect local businesses and the hospitality industry, Mr. Roces said.

“I agree with BSP Governor Remolona’s assessment that the Philippines should diversify its trade and investment partners to mitigate the risks associated with a slowdown in China,” he said.

“Diversification could involve focusing on other regional markets like Southeast Asia or the United States, developing domestic industries and attracting investments from diverse sources,” he added.

## Megawide’s PITX to add six routes this year, targets 23M passengers

PARAÑAQUE INTEGRATED Terminal Exchange (PITX), a subsidiary of listed infrastructure company Megawide Construction Corp., plans to add six routes this year as it targets a passenger volume of 23 million.

The expansion includes destinations like Tuguegarao City, San Carlos City, and Dagupan City in Pangasinan, along with San Pedro and Southwoods in Laguna, and Guimaras in Western Visayas, enhancing the current 100-route network, PITX said in a statement on Tuesday.

The landport has served 127 million passengers between 2019 and 2023 and anticipates reaching a total of 150 million passengers this year, it added. PITX was formally launched in November 2019.



BW FILE PHOTO

“The addition of new routes will contribute to PITX’s mission of becoming the central hub for domestic transportation, enabling travelers to reach their destinations with ease,” the landport said.

“We are thrilled to see this milestone come to fruition this year,” PITX Corporate Affairs and Govern-

ment Relations Head Jason T. Salvador said.

PITX is the country’s first landport. It is operated by Megawide’s MWM Terminals, Inc. under a 35-year build-transfer-operate contract.

On Tuesday, shares of Megawide rose by three centavos or 0.91% to P3.34 apiece. — **R.M.D. Ochave**

## PNOC eyes aquavoltaic systems for solar energy

STATE-RUN Philippine National Oil Co. (PNOC) is exploring the development of aquavoltaic systems in the Philippines, aiming to install solar panels atop fishponds.

“This is a very good convergence between agriculture production and energy,” PNOC President Oliver B. Butalid said in an interview last week.

PNOC hopes to carry out the project in expansive areas with the involvement of an investor.

“It is not going to disrupt the fish production, so we will be looking for contiguous fishpond areas in the hundreds of hectares.”

Ma. Rowena C. Raymundo, PNOC’s manager of business research and development department, said that the project is currently in the “drawing stage,” with plans to demonstrate it in fishponds located in Pampanga.

“The idea there is putting up solar panels above fishponds. It [would] cover about 40-60% of the area, so we don’t compromise the productivity of the fishponds,” she said.

Unlike floating solar technology, aquavoltaic system involves putting solar panels that are three meters above water by placing poles, she noted.

“[The proponent] is someone who has done this in Taiwan and China, and the results have been successful that is why they want to replicate, do it here in the Philippines.”

PNOC is also exploring the possibility of becoming a retail electricity supplier for government entities as part of its strategy to become a service provider to government agencies.

“We want to present this option to them because most of the government agencies who are large consumers of electricity... they are not very well-served by private players because there are peculiarities in the government, like everything we do has to go through a procurement,” Ms. Raymundo said. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

## GCash adds feature for user protection against scams

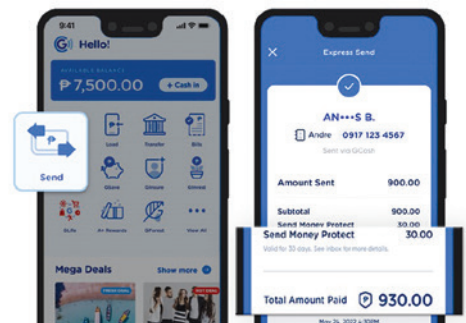
ELECTRONIC WALLET platform GCash announced on Tuesday a partnership with property and casualty insurance company Chubb to enhance user protection against scams.

GCash introduced a “Send Money Protect (SMP)” feature in its app, providing coverage up to P15,000 for users affected by scams like online shopping fraud, social engineering, and account takeover when using express send.

The SMP feature is an optional product covering all express send money transfers to GCash accounts for 30 days, available for P30 per month or P1 a day, the platform said in a statement.

“It can be availed by following three easy steps when sending money: first, ensure the send money protect box is checked in the express send transaction screen,” GCash said.

“After which, tap the pop-up screen to confirm, and lastly, proceed to finish the express send transaction, which is now protected with SMP,” it added.



GCash Vice-President Winsley Bangit said that the new SMP feature adds an “extra layer of protection” against cyber threats.

“We make sure to be relentless in strengthening cybersecurity measures against scammers, fraudsters, and other cyber criminals,” he said.

“While due diligence is needed in making sure that online transactions are legitimate, we hope this brings more confidence to all knowing that you are covered in case you become a victim of fraud,” he added. — **R.M.D. Ochave**

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