Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) 6,192.02 ▼ 74.73 PTS. ▼ 1.19%

MONDAY, MARCH 24, 2025
BusinessWorld

PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC	Ayala Corp.	P579.50	-P8.50	-1.45%
ACEN	ACEN Corp.	P3.00	-P0.05	-1.64%
AEV	Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc.	P32.40	+P0.30	+0.93%
AGI	Alliance Global Group, Inc.	P6.01	——	
ALI	Ayala Land, Inc.	P22.25	-P0.45	-1.98%
AREIT	AREIT, Inc.	P39.00	-P0.45	-1.14%
BDO	BDO Unibank, Inc.	P157.40	-P2.90	-1.81%
BLOOM	Bloomberry Resorts Corp.	P3.35	-P0.11	-3.18%
BPI	Bank of the Philippine Islands	P132.00	-P2.50	-1.86%
CBC	China Banking Corp.	P93.80	——	
CNPF	Century Pacific Food, Inc.	P39.40	-P1.50	-3.67%
CNVRG	Converge ICT Solutions, Inc.	P19.00	——	
DMC	DMCI Holdings, Inc.	P11.50	-P0.24	-2.04%
EMI	Emperador, Inc.	P12.44	+P0.44	+3.67%
GLO	Globe Telecom, Inc.	P2,162.00	-P36.00	-1.64%
GTCAP	GT Capital Holdings, Inc.	P507.00	——	
ICT	International Container Terminal Services, Inc.	P360.00	-P11.00	-2.96%
JFC	Jollibee Foods Corp.	P240.00	+P2.00	+0.84%
JGS	JG Summit Holdings, Inc.	P16.72	-P0.80	-4.57%
LTG	LT Group, Inc.	P12.40	——	
MBT	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	P73.60	+P0.60	+0.82%
MER	Manila Electric Co.	P523.00	-P5.00	-0.95%
MONDE	Monde Nissin Corp.	P7.48	-P0.03	-0.40%
PGOLD	Puregold Price Club, Inc.	P25.95	-P0.65	-2.44%
SCC	Semirara Mining and Power Corp.	P37.00	-P1.60	-4.15%
SM	SM Investments Corp.	P800.00	——	
SMC	San Miguel Corp.	P83.40	-P0.05	-0.06%
SMPH	SM Prime Holdings, Inc.	P23.15	-P0.35	-1.49%
TEL	PLDT Inc.	P1,290.00	-P11.00	-0.85%
URC	Universal Robina Corp.	P75.00	-P1.50	-1.96%

Megaworld to invest P30B in office expansion

LISTED PROPERTY developer Megaworld Corp. plans to invest P30 billion over the next five years to expand its office portfolio and enhance its existing properties nationwide.

"We are optimistic about the office sector in the Philippines, particularly as more international companies continue to enter the market, either to establish their presence or expand their operations here," Alliance Global Group President and Chief Executive Officer Kevin L. Tan said in a regulatory filing on Monday.

Alliance Global is the parent company of Megaworld.

Megaworld said the investment will fund office developments within its townships in Bulacan, Pampanga, Bacolod, Iloilo, Cebu, Davao, Metro Manila, and other planned township locations.

These office developments will be Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED)-registered and certified, featuring sustainable design and modern amenities.

"We see a significant increase in demand for office spaces, not just from BPO (business process outsourcing) companies but also from traditional corporate tenants," Mr. Tan said.

Megaworld said part of the investment will be allocated for the redevelopment and renovation of existing office properties.

"The new office towers will highlight our ongoing commitment to sustainability. We have been placing greater emphasis on this aspect of our business," said Megaworld President Lourdes Gutierrez-Alfonso.

As of 2025, Megaworld has opened office towers in its provincial townships, adding approximately 60,000 square meters of gross leasable area (GLA). These include Enterprise One in Iloilo Business Park, No. 1 Upper East in The Upper East Bacolod, and Pasudeco Tower in Capital Town Pampanga.

For this year, Megaworld plans to add another 50,000 square meters of office space in Bacolod, Iloilo, and Cebu.

Last year, Megaworld said it aims to reach two million square meters of gross leasable office space by 2030.

Currently, the company has 1.6 million square meters of leasable office space in its portfolio.

In 2024, Megaworld's attributable net income rose by 11.7% to P21.67 billion, driven by revenue growth in its residential business.

The company attributed its 2024 performance to the continued expansion of its core businesses, particularly in real estate, leasing, and hospitality.

Total revenue increased by 17.2% to P81.69 billion from P69.73 billion in 2023, primarily driven by real estate sales.

At the local bourse on Monday, Megaworld shares closed at P1.85 apiece, down 10 centavos or 0.54%. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

SM Investments celebrates 20th listing anniversary

SM INVESTMENTS CORP. (SMIC) marked its 20th listing anniversary at the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE). In the photo are (from left) SM Investments' Board and Management led by Chairman Emeritus Jose T. Sio; President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Frederic C. DyBuncio, Chairman and Independent Director Amando M. Tetangco, Jr. and Vice-Chairperson Teresita Sy-Coson. They were joined by (fifth from left) PSE President & CEO Ramon S. Monzon; Chief Operating Officer Roel A. Refran; Directors Vivian Yuchengco and Eddie T. Gobing, and Issuer Regulation Division Head Marigel M. Baniqued-Garcia. SMIC listed on March 22, 2005 with an adjusted price of P123.27 per share. Compared to the March 21, 2025 closing price of P800 per share, shares of the company have grown by 549% in the last two decades. Over the course of 20 years, SMIC's assets grew by 900%, delivering a compounded annual growth of 12%.

Jollibee Foods Corp. taps banks for US dollar bond issuance

JOLLIBEE FOODS Corp. (JFC) plans to issue US dollar-denominated bonds to raise funds for its growth plans and debt reduction.

In a stock exchange filing on Monday, JFC, through its wholly owned subsidiary Jollibee Worldwide Pte. Ltd., appointed J.P. Morgan Securities Asia Pte. Ltd. and Morgan Stanley Asia Pte. as joint global coordinators and bookrunners for the planned issuance.

JFC also engaged BPI Capital Corp. and Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd. (HSBC) Singapore branch as joint lead managers and bookrunners.

"Proceeds from the contemplated offering are intended for the issuer's general corporate purposes and/or refinancing of its existing borrowings," JFC said.

These institutions will arrange a series of fixed-income investor meetings on March 24 for JFC's Regulation S five-year US dollar-denominated senior unsecured guaranteed notes issuance, subject to market conditions.

A Regulation S issuance refers to securities offered outside the United States that are not registered under the US Securities Act or any US state securities laws, the company said.

For 2024, JFC earmarked P18 billion to P21 billion for capital expenditures to support its target of opening up to 800 new stores worldwide.

As of end-September 2023, JFC expanded its store network by 42.8% to 9,598 locations, comprising 3,340 stores in the Philippines and 6,258 overseas.

JFC operates 568 stores in China, 381 in North America, and 362 across Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. It also has 815 under Highlands Coffee, 1,219 under The Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf, 333 under Milksha, and 2,580 under Compose Coffee.

At the stock exchange on Monday, JFC shares gained P2, or 0.84%, closing at P240 apiece. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

BW ONE-ON-ONE

AI adoption key to customer engagement, says Twilio

By Beatriz Marie D. Cruz
Reporter

PHILIPPINE businesses must adopt artificial intelligence (AI) tools to meet consumer demand for personalized experiences, said American cloud communications company Twilio.

"I would argue that, in Asia as a whole — including the Philippines — you're seeing a higher level of sophistication among consumers," Nicholas Kontopoulos, vice-president of marketing, Asia-Pacific & Japan at Twilio, said in an interview with *BusinessWorld*.

"[This is evident] both in their knowledge of how to use the tools available to them to get the best deals possible, compare services, and gain insights into which brands are serving their customers well," he said.

Twilio helps companies build a platform for communication features such as messaging, calls, and customer support. It specializes in application programming interface (API), allowing businesses to seamlessly integrate Twilio's services into their respective applications.

Other customer engagement solutions the company specializes in include user authentication and identity verification, voice APIs, and short message service (SMS) marketing.

Twilio serves over 325,000 global enterprises, including major firms like Uber, IBM, Dell, and HubSpot. In the Philippines, Twilio covers business-to-business and business-to-client brands across industries such as financial services, retail, and airlines.

About 57% of Philippine consumers said they are likely to spend money on brands that personalize their services, according to Twilio's 2024 State of Customer Engagement Report.

Mr. Kontopoulos noted that companies' data silos — or isolated data across departments or units — hamper their ability to leverage customer engagement.

To address this, the Twilio Segment customer data platform (CDP) helps developers collect and unify customer data. It provides insights across a firm's marketing, sales, and customer service teams to ensure data-driven customer engagement.

The company is banking on its CDP to expand its reach in the Philippines, particularly in industries such as retail and financial services, amid the increasing demand for personalized customer engagement.

Likewise, the company's ConversationRelay enables businesses to create robust natural-voice AI agents for customer inquiries. It seamlessly integrates real-time streaming, speech recognition, and interruption handling.

"Where I really get excited about AI is how it also will support individual employees in performing their roles more effectively," he said, adding that AI can increase companies' productivity by 20-30%.

CONSUMER TRUST

Despite this, Twilio seeks to ensure that its products are designed to secure customer data, the company said.

"People think about customer experience always at the front end, but security is a great opportunity to deliver and really solidify customer experience and trust," he said.

It maintains a risk-based assessment security program based on the ISO/IEC 27001 information security management system (ISMS), according to its website. This includes administrative, technical, organizational, and physical safeguards reasonably designed to protect its services and the security, confidentiality, integrity, and availability of customer data.


NICHOLAS KONTOPOULOS

The company also conducts regular external audits and subjects its employees to minimum security measures.

According to Mr. Kontopoulos, trust remains the "bedrock" of the customer experience.

"If I'm sharing my data with you, are you using that data? Are you protecting that data?" he said. "But then it's also not just about protecting the data. Are you using that data in a way that creates value for me?"

Mr. Kontopoulos also cited the need for brands to be transparent about their AI use, especially in customer interactions.

"I think that's one of the mistakes that businesses could make — if they don't inform consumers that they're dealing with an AI agent, and for whatever reason, their experience doesn't go the way they hoped, it could create a negative reaction."

According to Twilio's latest State of Customer Engagement Report, Filipino consumers cite transparent communication (75%), accessibility and responsive customer service (73%) as the most effective ways brands can build their trust.

Amid firms' rapid adoption of AI, the Department of Information and Communications Technology has been drafting its own guidelines on the ethical and trustworthy use of AI-related technologies.

Likewise, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas recently said it will issue regulations aimed at mitigating potential risks in the use of AI in the financial sector.

According to Mr. Kontopoulos, brands' ability to personalize customer engagement through AI will impact their competitiveness.

"If you're not doing this, you're going to find yourself quickly falling behind your consumers' expectations as well as your competitors who are servicing them."

Globe Telecom and Gogolook partner to combat rising online scams

GLOBE TELECOM, Inc. has partnered with global TrustTech company Gogolook Co. Ltd. to provide free access to its call identification and spam-blocking application, Whoscall, to help combat rising scams and online threats.

"Our partnership with Gogolook empowers our users with an added layer of security, equipping them with the tools they need to identify and block potential scams. As online fraud continues to evolve, we remain steadfast in our commitment to safeguarding our customers' lives and ensuring they can connect safely and confidently," Globe's Consumer Mobile Business Officer-in-Charge Eric Leif Tanbauco said in a media release on Monday.

The partnership will give Globe customers access to Whoscall Premium Basic, providing an additional layer of digital security, Globe said.

Globe and Gogolook have streamlined the activation process, allowing seamless access for customers. Globe Platinum and postpaid customers will receive free access to Whoscall Premium Basic for one year, it said.

Prepaid customers can redeem it through the Globe Rewards catalog for two Rewards points or claim a complimentary voucher via Globe Rewards+.

System software company Gogolook is the developer of Whoscall. The application offers caller identification, distinguishing between safe contacts and potential scammers.

Headquartered in Taiwan, Gogolook utilizes its database and advanced artificial intelligence technology to provide services in communication fraud prevention and financial technology.

"As part of Gogolook's mission to help Filipinos navigate the online space safely, we are offering Whoscall Premium Basic for Globe customers in a pilot run starting this April," Gogolook Philippines Country Head Mel Migriño said.

"This initiative goes beyond technology — it's about shared advocacy," he added. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**