

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)					6,335.33	▼ 119.51 PTS.	▼ 1.85%	TUESDAY, MAY 20, 2025	
BusinessWorld									
PSEi MEMBER STOCKS									
AC Ayala Corp. P550.00 -P0.50 -0.09%	ACEN ACEN Corp. P2.51 -P0.04 -1.57%	AEV Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P35.15 -P0.65 -1.82%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P7.05 +P0.05 +0.71%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P23.00 +P0.10 +0.44%	AREIT AREIT, Inc. P39.40 -P0.40 -1.01%	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P155.10 -P2.70 -1.71%	BLOOM Bloomberry Resorts Corp. P3.99 -P0.08 -1.97%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P131.10 -P4.80 -3.53%	CBC China Banking Corp. P81.70 +P0.20 0.25%
CNPF Century Pacific Food, Inc. P39.65 -P0.35 -0.88%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P20.00 ---	DMC DMCI Holdings, Inc. P10.40 -P0.10 -0.95%	EMI Emperador, Inc. P13.40 -P0.06 -0.45%	GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,800.00 -P21.00 -1.15%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P535.00 -P8.00 -1.47%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P400.00 -P16.00 -3.85%	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P242.00 +P2.00 +0.83%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P20.00 -P0.40 -1.96%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P12.46 +P0.14 +1.14%
MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P75.55 -P1.45 -1.88%	MER Manila Electric Co. P555.00 -P4.50 -0.80%	MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P7.08 -P0.03 -0.42%	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P31.00 -P0.65 -2.05%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P31.95 -P0.35 -1.08%	SM SM Investments Corp. P863.00 -P25.00 -2.82%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P80.30 -P1.70 -2.07%	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P23.50 -P0.60 -2.49%	TEL PLDT Inc. P1,257.00 -P22.00 -1.72%	URC Universal Robina Corp. P90.00 -P1.00 -1.10%

MGen nears halfway mark in P200-B MTerra solar project

MERALCO POWERGEN CORP. (MGen), the power generation subsidiary of Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), is nearly halfway toward the completion of the P200-billion MTerra Solar Power Project, with 700 megawatts-peak (MWp) of solar panels targeted for installation by end-July, its president said.

“Probably around 44 to 45% completion,” MGen President and Chief Executive Officer Manuel V. Rubio told reporters on the sidelines of Schneider Electric Innovation Day Philippines 2025 on Tuesday.

Mr. Rubio was referring to the status of what is expected to be the world’s largest integrated

solar photovoltaic and battery energy storage system (BESS) facility.

Spanning over 3,500 hectares across Nueva Ecija and Bulacan, MTerra Solar is developing a 3,500-MWp solar power plant and a 4,500-megawatt-hour (MWh) energy storage system.

Mr. Rubio said the company is on track to complete the first phase of the project by the first quarter of 2026.

MGen has already installed 90-100 MWp of solar panels.

Once operational, MTerra Solar will supply clean electricity to approximately 2.4 million households and displace an esti-

mated 4.3 million tons of carbon dioxide per year.

For the planned MTerra Solar 2, Mr. Rubio said the company will execute the project once it secures the necessary land.

Mr. Rubio said MGen is also looking to develop up to a 40-MWh BESS in Cardona, Cebu.

The project is targeted to be operational by the third quarter of 2026.

With MGen’s pipeline projects, the company is expected to surpass its goal of 1,500 MW of renewable energy capacity by 2030.

Meanwhile, Mr. Rubio said MGen has held initial talks with energy solutions company

Schneider Electric to integrate predictive analytics and distributed control systems into its coal plant units that are more than 10 years old.

“But I think one of the major opportunities is to actually use AI (artificial intelligence) in how we operate the Terra Solar 1,” he said.

Meralco’s controlling stakeholder, Beacon Electric Asset Holdings, Inc., is partly owned by PLDT Inc.

Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has an interest in *Business-World* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls. —

Sheldeen Joy Talavera

BW ONE-ON-ONE Innovative financing seen to boost PHL just energy transition

By Ashley Erika O. Jose
Reporter

CLIMATE SMART VENTURES Pte. Ltd. is optimistic that the Philippines can meet — and potentially exceed — its just energy transition goals through innovative financing mechanisms and stronger corporate commitments to sustainability.

“We were founded at the height of the pandemic, basically as a response to figure out ways to accelerate the shift from fossil fuels to renewables,” Climate Smart Ventures Founder and Managing Partner Lawrence Ang said in an interview with *BusinessWorld*.

Established in 2020, Climate Smart Ventures is a transition and transaction advisory firm assisting energy companies in Asia in decarbonizing their operations. It provides strategic guidance on financial mechanisms and transition pathways, including the development of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) policies and decarbonization roadmaps.

The firm currently operates in the Philippines, Vietnam, Singapore, Indonesia, and India.

“In emerging markets like Asia, coal is something you love to hate and hate to love. We realized that we need to do this in a just, managed, but also commercially viable way,” Mr. Ang said.

He said Climate Smart Ventures supports companies in designing business models that enable a transition from coal to renewable sources, while taking into account prevailing market conditions and regulatory structures.

“Particularly, how power purchase agreements are structured. You still have to find ways to work with that. Understanding increasing demand for power in these different jurisdictions and also understanding how financing can be used as a tool and other capital market solutions,” he said.

Some local energy firms are also exploring opportunities under a memorandum of understanding signed by the Philippines and Singapore in 2023, which seeks to jointly develop carbon credit mechanisms under Article 6 of the Paris Agreement.

The accord aims to help both countries meet their climate goals by promoting carbon markets and exchanging best practices.

The Paris Agreement commits signatories to limit the rise in global temperatures to well below 2°C from pre-industrial levels, with efforts to keep the increase below 1.5°C.

Transition credits are one example of financing mechanisms being considered. These instruments leverage carbon finance to accelerate the retirement of fossil-fuel assets and their replacement with clean energy, while promoting a just transition.

The Philippines aims to raise the share of renewable energy in its power generation mix to 35% by 2030 and to 50% by 2040. Fossil fuels continue to dominate the current energy mix.

“It is also worth recognizing that these power plant owners have ambitions to decarbonize,” Mr. Ang said. “The target is probably achievable and can even be surpassed with the right mechanism in place.”

“We help them execute a transaction that is feasible. We then come up with the correct financing structure and frameworks,” he added.



LAWRENCE ANG

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Mr. Ang said Philippine energy companies are showing greater willingness to adopt transition tools and shift to clean energy technologies.

“I think you’d be hard-pressed to find companies who aren’t committing to some kind of decarbonization. If you look at all the big companies in the Philippines, at least the big ones, the ones that are driving the power market, everyone is committed to some kind of a net-zero or a clean energy target,” he said.

He also cited the Philippines’ move to open the renewable energy sector to full foreign ownership as a major draw for global investors.

“This kind of policy openness is crucial to attracting capital and technology that will help the country meet its clean energy goals,” he said.

JFC plans further store rollouts in Southeast Asia

JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. (JFC) is planning to expand the footprint of its flagship brand in Southeast Asia, even as the group reported an 8.1% decline in first-quarter (Q1) net income to P2.41 billion due to higher non-operating expenses.

In a statement on Tuesday, JFC said the Jollibee brand will continue growing its store network in Southeast Asia as part of its five-year strategy to triple attributable net income.

Systemwide sales from Jollibee’s operations in Southeast Asia — excluding the Philippines — rose by 27.8% in the first quarter.

The brand operates in Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, and Brunei.

Last year, the brand opened 51 new stores in the region, including its 200th outlet in Vietnam.

“Our continued strong growth across our international markets, particularly Southeast Asia, is a testament to the hard work of our team and commitment to our five-year strategy of tripling attributable net income,” Jollibee Group Chief Executive Officer and Global President Ernesto Tanmantiong said.

Jollibee continues to see strong demand across Southeast

Asian markets, particularly for its Chickenjoy fried chicken and Spicy Chickenjoy in Singapore and Malaysia.

The brand has also introduced regional menu items such as Chili Chicken in Vietnam and Spicy Spaghetti in Malaysia.

“Our commitment to delivering superior taste has fueled our growth in Southeast Asia, and we’re grateful to have passionate franchisees and partners who share in this mission,” Jollibee Europe, Middle East, Asia, and Australia President Dennis M. Flores said.

The group is also seeking new franchisees in untapped Southeast Asian markets.

As of end-March, JFC operated 9,935 stores globally — 3,393 in the Philippines and 6,542 overseas.

Its international store network includes 560 stores in China, 361 in North America, 393 in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, 865 with Highlands Coffee, 1,246 with The Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf, 340 with Milksha, 2,700 with Compose Coffee, and 77 with Tim Ho Wan.

JFC shares rose by 0.83% or P2 to close at P242 apiece on Tuesday. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

CBK,
from SI/1

The National Government’s budget deficit ballooned to P478.8 billion in the first quarter, higher by 75.62% from the P272.6-billion gap in the same period in 2024.

Mr. Rivera said proceeds from the sale of CBK plants would help generate much-needed revenues for the government’s infrastructure projects and social programs.

“Ultimately, the sale should balance three objectives: fiscal relief, operational efficiency, and alignment with the country’s clean energy roadmap,” he said in a Viber message on Tuesday.

Mr. Arce also noted firms that are looking to expand their renewable energy offerings could be interested in making a bid for the CBK complex. Investors seeking long-term results could also be keen on participating in the rebidding.

San Miguel Global Power Holdings Corp., Prime Infrastructure Capital, Inc. and Hexa Philippines Holdings, Inc. have earlier expressed interest in participating in the rebidding for the CBK plants.

CBK is currently under a 25-year build-rehabilitate-operate-transfer contract and power purchase agreement between CBK Power Co. Ltd. and National Power Corp. that ends in February 2026.

The facility includes the 39.37-MW Caliraya in Lumban, 22.91-MW Botocan HEPP in Majayjay, and 366-MW Kalayaan I and 368.36-MW Kalayaan II pump storage power plants in Laguna.

BusinessWorld reached out to the Energy Regulatory Commission for comment, but no reply has been received so far.

Startup,
from SI/1

“The Philippines’ startup scene remains centralized in Manila, whose ecosystem is twelve times larger than Cebu City’s. This gap has more than doubled since 2020,” StartupBlink said.

However, Manila had the lowest ecosystem annual growth rate among cities in the Philippines at 2.6%.

Cebu City fell 10 spots globally to rank 469th, with an annual growth rate of 9%.

Davao City rose 163 spots to 580th spot globally, as its startup ecosystem grew by 97.7% last year.

Cagayan de Oro and Naga climbed the global rankings at 693rd and 767th, respectively.

New entrants to the global rankings include Iloilo City (744th), Cauayan City, Isabela (1,040th), and Solana City in Cagayan (1,170th).

“The Philippines stands as Southeast Asia’s fastest-growing digital economy, reflecting a dynamic consumer market ripe for innovative startups,” StartupBlink said.

However, the Philippines faces several challenges that are hampering its development as a mature startup ecosystem.

“The lack of infrastructure is a limiting factor to the country’s economic growth, and entrepreneurs struggle with slow regulatory support for their startups,” it added.

PRIVATIZATION EFFORTS

Separately, Ms. Fong said the DoF’s Privatization and Management Office (PMO) office supports the planned P45.8-billion initial public offering of the Pan-gilinan-led water concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc.

“We’re supporting that because it has the potential to bring in foreign direct investment, and of course, we always support the capital market,” she said.

In addition, Ms. Fong said the PMO is currently in the process of selling the Ecology Villages in Makati City to the occupants.

“That’s no closed sale yet because we’re dealing with the homeowners as a group. It’s still a long process. We’re determining the metes and bounds, we need to subdivide the title, negotiate on the common areas, etc. But it’s an ongoing process. We’re closely focused on this,” Ms. Fong said in mixed English and Filipino.

In February, the privatization office published its revised guidelines for auctioning government assets which allows unsolicited bids, particularly for small properties.

Ms. Fong earlier told reporters that there are 28,000 titles in the database, which include properties as small as 200 square meters, making the acquisition process attractive to ordinary citizens.

Asked if the privatization goal is still pegged at P101 billion, she said the this is a “fluid number.”

“We’ll have more clarity later when the other revenues come in. I always just try to sell as much as I can,” she said.

She also noted that these idle assets incur maintenance costs without generating economic value for the government.