Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) 6,233.62 ▲ 22.96 PTS. ▲ 0.37%

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2025
BusinessWorld

PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC	Ayala Corp.	P520.00	+P1.00	+0.19%
ACEN	ACEN Corp.	P2.26	+P0.06	+2.73%
AEV	Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc.	P31.55	——	
AGI	Alliance Global Group, Inc.	P7.68	-P0.10	-1.29%
ALI	Ayala Land, Inc.	P26.95	-P0.80	-2.88%
AREIT	AREIT, Inc.	P44.90	——	
BDO	BDO Unibank, Inc.	P144.00	+P1.00	+0.70%
BPI	Bank of the Philippine Islands	P114.00	+P2.00	+1.79%
CBC	China Banking Corp.	P62.50	+P0.50	+0.81%
CNPF	Century Pacific Food, Inc.	P38.75	-P0.20	-0.51%
CNVRG	Converge ICT Solutions, Inc.	P12.10	-P0.42	-3.35%
DMC	DMCI Holdings, Inc.	P11.54	+P0.04	+0.35%
EMI	Emperador, Inc.	P16.22	+P0.14	+0.87%
GLO	Globe Telecom, Inc.	P1,599.00	+P69.00	+4.51%
GTCAP	GT Capital Holdings, Inc.	P669.00	-P3.00	-0.45%
ICT	International Container Terminal Services, Inc.	P507.00	——	
JFC	Jollibee Foods Corp.	P219.00	-P1.40	-0.64%
JGS	JG Summit Holdings, Inc.	P24.85	+P0.35	+1.43%
LTG	LT Group, Inc.	P14.66	+P0.06	+0.41%
MBT	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	P68.85	+P0.20	+0.29%
MER	Manila Electric Co.	P543.50	-P12.50	-2.25%
MONDE	Monde Nissin Corp.	P7.05	-P0.05	-0.70%
PGOLD	Puregold Price Club, Inc.	P45.20	+P1.20	+2.73%
PLUS	DigiPlus Interactive Corp.	P22.25	+P0.05	+0.23%
SCC	Semirara Mining and Power Corp.	P35.85	-P0.15	-0.42%
SM	SM Investments Corp.	P765.00	+P16.00	+2.14%
SMC	San Miguel Corp.	P58.00	-P0.05	-0.09%
SMPH	SM Prime Holdings, Inc.	P24.10	+P0.15	+0.63%
TEL	PLDT Inc.	P1,133.00	+P4.00	+0.35%
URC	Universal Robina Corp.	P73.50	-P0.75	-1.01%

PHL companies remain near bottom in AI adoption amid investment gaps — Hitachi

By Beatriz Marie D. Cruz
Reporter

PHILIPPINE COMPANIES sit closer to the lower end of the artificial intelligence (AI) adoption curve due to limited investment, cultural and language barriers, and weak scaling strategies, according to Hitachi Vantara, the US-based digital infrastructure unit of Japan's Hitachi, Ltd.

"From a regional perspective, APAC (Asia-Pacific) overall is moving quickly, with significant investments flowing from countries such as Singapore, South Korea, Japan, and China — in some cases matching the pace of the US," Jason Hardy, chief technology officer for AI at Hitachi Vantara, said in an e-mail interview with *BusinessWorld*.

"In contrast, Australia and New Zealand remain slow adopters. The Philippines sits closer to the lower end of the adoption curve — moving faster than Australia and New Zealand, but still behind regional leaders like South Korea, China, and Singapore," he added.

UNSPLASH/DJ SERRANO

He said one reason is the lack of comparable commitment to build AI infrastructure locally.

He also cited a 2024 study by the Philippine Institute for Development Studies showing that while 90.8% of enterprises have computers and 81% have internet access, only 14.9% use AI.

At the same time, the country also faces cultural and language barriers in adopting AI since many systems are not optimized for the local context, he noted.

"Unlike markets such as India or China, where governments and enterprises are creating foundational models tuned to local languages and contexts, the Philippines has not yet made a concerted push in this area," he said.

"Without that foundation, adoption is slower, as systems are not yet optimized for the country's unique cultural and linguistic landscape."

Mr. Hardy noted that early adoption of agentic AI — which acts with a degree of autonomy based on real-world inputs — has become a competitive differentiator for companies.

"Companies that invest early will be able to process information faster, make better-informed decisions, and execute more quickly than their peers," he said.

He added that many firms confuse generative AI with agentic AI which produces content such as text or images based on context.

"This could mean anything from creating marketing material in response to customer behavior to monitoring the power grid and making recommendations based on live system data," he said.

A common misstep among Philippine companies, he said, is focusing on pilots and proofs-of-concept without scaling the necessary architecture to support autonomous operations.

"This results in stalled projects and limited return on investment (RoI)," Mr. Hardy said, adding that many firms also overlook the importance of governance and auditability processes that could strengthen trust and accelerate adoption.

He said organizations should prepare their environment for agentic workloads, with architectures that support multi-agent coordination and dynamic resource allocation, and prioritize generating high-quality data to avoid the "garbage in, garbage out" problem.

"In reality, these are capabilities and tools designed to accelerate outcomes, not plug-and-play solutions. Expecting instant RoI is flawed; it takes practice, expertise, and a willingness to accept failures along the way before consistent successes emerge," he said.

A report by Boston Consulting Group estimates that AI and generative AI could contribute around $120 billion to the combined gross domestic product of six ASEAN economies — Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam — by 2027.

ABOITIZPOWER.COM

AboitizPower to redeem P2.5-B bonds three years ahead of maturity

LISTED power generator Aboitiz Power Corp. (AboitizPower) will redeem P2.5 billion worth of fixed-rate retail bonds this month, three years earlier than their 2028 maturity.

In a regulatory filing on Thursday, AboitizPower said its board of directors approved the early redemption of its ten-year Series C bonds issued in 2018, which carry an annual interest rate of 8.6091%.

The company said it will fully prepay the bonds using proceeds from its retail bond issuance earlier this year.

BDO Unibank, Inc.-Trust and Investment Group and the Philippine Depository and Trust Corp. were tapped as trustee and paying agent, respectively, to issue the redemption notices and compute amounts due to bondholders.

In July, AboitizPower raised up to P30 billion from fixed-rate retail bonds, proceeds of which were earmarked for refinancing obligations.

The offer consisted of P20 billion in retail bonds with an oversubscription option of up to P10 billion, the first tranche of its P100-billion bond program.

AboitizPower is targeting 9,200 megawatts of attributable net sellable capacity by 2030, split evenly between renewable and thermal sources.

The company held a 23.86% share of the national grid as of July, according to the Energy Regulatory Commission. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

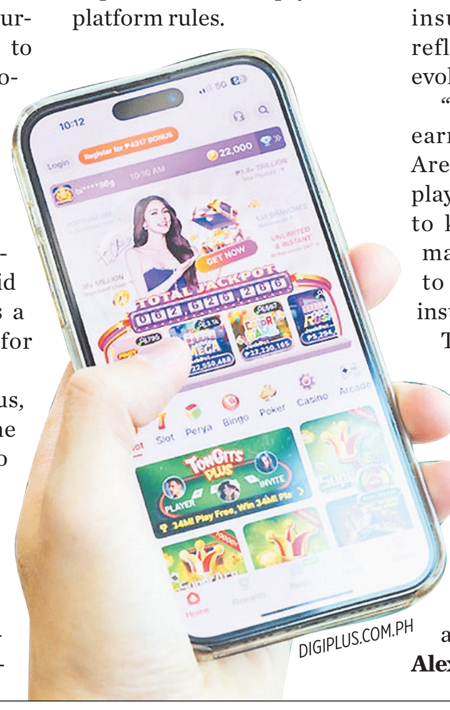
DigiPlus, PhilFirst roll out surety bond covering players' in-game funds

LISTED DigiPlus Interactive Corp. (PLUS) has partnered with Philippine First Insurance Co., Inc. (PhilFirst) to roll out a surety bond program that provides financial protection for players' in-game wallets and balances.

In a statement on Thursday, DigiPlus Chairman Eusebio H. Tanco said the program introduces a new layer of protection for players' in-game funds.

Players using BingoPlus, ArenaPlus, and GameZone will be covered for up to P1 million without the need for a separate policy, the company said.

To qualify, players must update their electronic Know-Your-Customer (eKYC) information, make at least one deposit, and comply with platform rules.



DIGIPLUS.COM.PH

PhilFirst, founded in 1906 as the first Filipino domestic insurer, said the program reflects its commitment to evolve with the market.

"Protecting the hard-earned funds of BingoPlus, ArenaPlus, and GameZone players reflects our promise to keep evolving with the market while staying true to our core mission," the insurer said.

The program complements DigiPlus' existing 24/7 customer support and more than 130 physical BingoPlus stores nationwide, according to the company.

Shares in DigiPlus rose 0.23% to P22.25 apiece on Thursday. — **Alexandria Grace C. Magno**

GCash partners with InvestaTrade for upgraded stock trading platform

GCASH has partnered with InvestaTrade, the stock trading arm of Investa, to roll out an upgraded version of its GStocks platform aimed at first-time investors.

The enhanced platform, launched on Sept. 15, allows users to register, fund their accounts, and begin investing in local stocks directly through the GCash app.

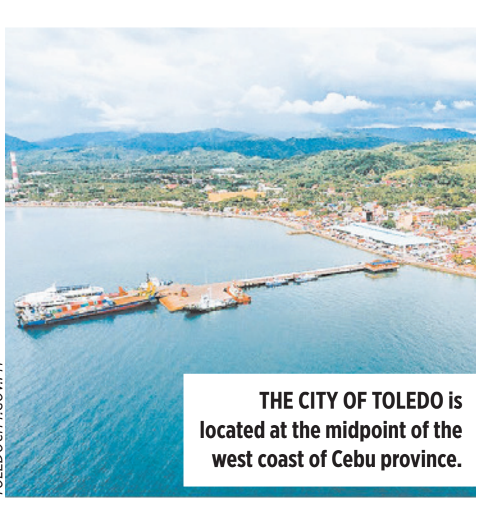
It also includes built-in educational content to promote financial literacy and ease of stock selection.

"This collaboration allows us to take what we've built at Investa — tools, education, and a supportive community — and make it available to a wider audience through GCash," Investa Chief Executive Officer and Co-founder John Christian Bisnar said in a statement.

Investa Chief Technology Officer and Co-founder Airwyn Tin said the partnership leverages InvestaTrade's platform features with GCash's reach "to simplify the learning curve and equip first-time and experienced users alike with reliable tools."

GCash Wealth Management General Manager Arjun Varma said the initiative seeks to "meet people where they are and give them room to grow at their own pace."

To access GStocks, users must be fully verified on GCash with updated know-your-customer records in the past three years. — **Aaron Michael C. Sy**



TOLEDOCITY.GOV.PH

THE CITY OF TOLEDO is located at the midpoint of the west coast of Cebu province.

MGEN to start Cebu battery storage build with Chinese partners

MERALCO POWERGEN CORP. (MGEN), the power generation arm of Manila Electric Co. (Meralco), has tapped two Chinese firms to build its 49-megawatt (MW) battery energy storage system (BESS) in Toledo, Cebu.

In a statement on Thursday, MGEN said it signed an engineering, procurement, and construction contract with Contemporary Amperex Technology Co. Ltd. (CATL) and SUMEC Complete Equipment and Engineering Co. Ltd. (SUMEC).

CATL specializes in energy storage, while SUMEC provides global engineering solutions. Both firms will supply advanced battery technologies and help ensure the project's timely completion.

Construction and installation are scheduled to begin this month. The project's first phase will deliver 25 MW by the second quarter of 2026, with the balance expected in 2027.

MGEN President and Chief Executive Officer Emmanuel V. Rubio said the Toledo facility is expected to enhance grid reliability in the Visayas.

"With CATL and SUMEC as our partners, the Toledo BESS project will take shape with the benefit of proven expertise and world-class technology," he said.

At a briefing, Mr. Rubio said the facility could also help lower costs in the reserve market by providing efficient backup power.

A BESS stores electricity from the grid and releases it as needed to augment supply or stabilize power quality.

MGEN had a net sellable capacity of more than 5,000 MW across the Philippines and Singapore as of end-August.

The company aims to expand this to 10,346 MW by 2030.

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 *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**