

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,419.96

▲ 71.82 PTS.

▲ 1.13%

MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026

BusinessWorld

PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC

Ayala Corp.

P502.00

+P13.00 +2.66%

ACEN

ACEN Corp.

P3.02

+P0.05 +1.68%

AEV

Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc.

P30.60

-P0.80 -2.55%

AGI

Alliance Global Group, Inc.

P8.08

+P0.15 +1.89%

ALI

Ayala Land, Inc.

P23.00

+P0.50 +2.22%

AREIT

AREIT, Inc.

P43.05

-P0.60 -1.37%

BDO

BDO Unibank, Inc.

P142.50

+P3.40 +2.44%

BPI

Bank of the Philippine Islands

P123.40

+P2.70 +2.24%

CBC

China Banking Corp.

P63.00

+P0.45 +0.72%

CNPF

Century Pacific Food, Inc.

P40.60

+P0.70 +1.75%

CNVRG

Converge ICT Solutions, Inc.

P15.58

+P0.40 +2.64%

DMC

DMCI Holdings, Inc.

P10.80

+P0.14 +1.31%

EMI

Emperador, Inc.

P16.02

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GLO

Globe Telecom, Inc.

P1,620.00

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GTCAP

GT Capital Holdings, Inc.

P601.50

-P4.50 -0.74%

ICT

International Container Terminal Services, Inc.

P626.00

+P1.00 +0.16%

JFC

Jollibee Foods Corp.

P207.60

+P1.60 +0.78%

JGS

JG Summit Holdings, Inc.

P24.30

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LTG

LT Group, Inc.

P15.46

+P0.42 +2.79%

MBT

Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.

P72.35

+P2.05 +2.92%

MER

Manila Electric Co.

P590.00

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MONDE

Monde Nissin Corp.

P6.02

-P0.06 -0.99%

PGOLD

Puregold Price Club, Inc.

P40.00

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PLUS

DigiPlus Interactive Corp.

P15.60

-P0.70 -4.29%

SCC

Semirara Mining and Power Corp.

P31.00

+P0.50 +1.64%

SM

SM Investments Corp.

P735.00

+P5.00 +0.68%

SMC

San Miguel Corp.

P85.00

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SMPH

SM Prime Holdings, Inc.

P23.90

+P0.75 +3.24%

TEL

PLDT Inc.

P1,320.00

+P20.00 +1.54%

URC

Universal Robina Corp.

P71.00

+P0.10 +0.14%

# Telco landscape to see major shifts, investment growth — analysts

By Ashley Erika O. Jose  
Reporter

PHILIPPINE telecommunications companies (telcos) are preparing for major shifts in the telco landscape, including margin pressure and evolving business strategies, as the Konektadong Pinoy Act reshapes competition, according to analysts.

“The entry of new participants and a more intense competitive market dynamic could temper the margins and growth prospects of the current major players,” **YEARENDER** Managing Director Juan Paolo E. Colet said in a Viber message.

However, he noted that incumbent operators retain advantages that could help cushion the impact of heightened competition.

“Industry leaders can leverage their position as incumbent operators to drive expansion and profitability, including brand equity, deep local market knowledge, and financial resources,” he said, adding that some players also have room to improve operational efficiency.

The Konektadong Pinoy Act, also known as the Open Access in Data Transmission Act, lapsed into law on Aug. 24, while its implementing rules and regulations (IRR) were signed on Nov. 5. The law removed the requirement for a legislative franchise for data transmission players, easing market entry, and promoting infrastructure sharing.

John Paolo R. Rivera, a senior research fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, said the law is poised to significantly alter the competitive landscape.

“As a ‘gamechanger’ law, I expect it to spur fresh investment in the country’s digital and connectivity sector by removing the need for a legislative franchise and easing entry barriers for data-transmission players, thus opening the market to more competition,” he said.

He added that mandated infrastructure sharing could lower costs and encourage network expansion.

“By mandating infrastructure sharing and focusing on unserved and underserved areas, it reduces costs and encourages both domestic and foreign investors to expand broadband, fiber, and satellite networks,” he said.

Information and Communications Technology Secretary Henry Rhoel R.

Aguda said several foreign players have already expressed interest in entering the Philippine market.

“So far, seven foreign data transmission industry participants have already signified their interests in entering the telecom industry,” Mr. Aguda said, noting that each is expected to invest about \$1.5 billion.

Under the IRR, data transmission industry participants (DTIPs) will be allowed to construct, install, establish, maintain, lease, or own networks and facilities without a legislative franchise, while also promoting asset sharing between incumbents and new entrants.

The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) will serve as the primary policy and coordinating body for the law’s implementation, Mr. Aguda said, adding that the agency will also issue guidelines on cybersecurity standards aligned with each DTIP’s risk profile.

“The State shall promote data transmission infrastructure sharing and co-location to eliminate the uneconomic duplication of these facilities in the data transmission industry,” according to the IRR.

## INCUMBENT CONCERNS

PLDT Inc. Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan said the law’s implementing rules unfairly disadvantage existing operators.

“I think [Konektadong Pinoy] has added to our concerns. Eventually, what does the bill and the IRR hope to accomplish?” he said.

He criticized provisions requiring incumbents to share infrastructure with new entrants. “They are going to use our infrastructure, and their claim is that the existing infrastructure is inadequate. Yet they are going to use inadequate infrastructure. How does that improve the service?” he said.

PLDT Chief Legal Counsel Joan de Venecia-Fabul said the company is studying its options. “We are not yet in a position to say what legal remedies, but we are actively studying all [options] because ultimately we want to support the goal of the President, especially for greater connectivity,” she said.

Meanwhile, Converge Information and Communications Technology Solutions, Inc. views the law as a catalyst for expanding its wholesale business.

“The Konektadong Pinoy Law is helping competition deepen, which opens opportunities for faster rollout to communities,” Converge Chief Executive Officer Dennis Anthony H. Uy said.

He said infrastructure sharing could reduce capital expenditures (capex) for new operators while supporting Converge’s expansion.

“Infrastructure doesn’t come overnight, which is why we are ready for Konektadong Pinoy’s infrastructure sharing provisions for both backbone and distribution networks,” Mr. Uy said.

“In other countries, infrastructure sharing has proven to be beneficial because it reduces capex for new operators. It’s a win-win situation for us, and we are ready for Konektadong Pinoy implementation,” he added.

Globe Telecom, Inc. said it is continuing to innovate as competition intensifies.

“I think the DNA of Globe is about innovation and innovation actually addresses the pain points of the customers,” Globe Chief Commercial Officer Darius R. Delgado said.

“In the prepaid or fiber space, we would just continue the formula that works. We will continue developing things for them, then the demand will come,” he added.

DITO Telecommunity Corp. expressed support for the law’s objectives, particularly expanding access in far-flung areas.

“When you look at the noble objectives of the [Konektadong Pinoy], we are fully supportive of that,” said DITO Telecommunity President and Chief Executive Officer Ernesto R. Alberto.

“Who does not want to democratize access to the internet, broadband to a wider base?” he added.

DITO Chief Revenue Officer Adel A. Tamano said regulations should remain flexible for new entrants.

“New players should not be subjected to the same level of requirements currently imposed on incumbent operators,” he said.

## REGULATORY AND MARKET IMPACT

For Samuel V. Jacoba, founding president of the National Association of Data Protection Officers of the Philippines, the IRR strikes a balance by imposing cybersecurity requirements.

“Within two years from registration or authorization, DTIPs shall secure a cybersecurity certification or cybersecurity compliance from the DICT Cybersecurity Bureau,” the IRR said.

Mr. Jacoba said the timeline is reasonable.

“Two years will be enough time for new operators to establish baseline cy-



PHILIPPINE STAR/MICHAEL VARGAS

bersecurity compliance anchored on global standards,” he said, adding that incumbents should already meet such requirements.

Digital Pinoy’s national campaigner Ronald B. Gustilo said the law could broaden the market base.

“When more Filipinos gain reliable access to the internet, the demand for digital services, e-commerce, and financial technology naturally rises,” he said. “This creates a multiplier effect across industries,” he added.

Mr. Aguda said the DICT expects internet prices to decline and service quality to improve as competition increases.

“We do anticipate increased investment in the connectivity sector as a result of the Konektadong Pinoy law. It provides predictability and policy direction — two major factors that investors look into before committing capital,” he said.

The law offers tax incentives, including income tax holidays and value-added tax exemptions. Tower companies’ operating licenses have been extended to 15 years from five years at no additional cost.

DICT, in partnership with the Australian government, has completed a real-time mapping of all fiber optic lines nationwide, which will guide efforts to expand connectivity to 100% of households.

Lower internet prices and improved service quality are expected as new players enter the market, especially in underserved and far-flung areas.

Despite being a national priority since 2022, the Philippines’ digital transformation has lagged due to weak broadband infrastructure and restrictive policies, according to a July World Bank report. Only 28% of households had fixed broadband access in 2023, while the country had more than half of Southeast Asia’s unconnected mobile broadband users.

## Megaworld earmarks P8B for Negros township

LISTED property developer Megaworld Corp. has allocated P8 billion to develop a 97-hectare (ha) township in Negros Occidental, banking on continued growth in the Visayas.

The project, called The Sugartown, is the company’s 37<sup>th</sup> township in the Philippines and its seventh estate in the Visayas, Megaworld said in a stock exchange disclosure on Monday.

The township will be located in Talisay City, Negros Occidental, with development expected to be completed over seven to 10 years.

The property is Megaworld’s third mixed-use development in the Negros Island Region, following the 53-ha Northill Gateway and the 34-ha township The Upper East.

The Sugartown will feature premium residential developments under Megaworld and its wholly owned subsidiary Suntrust Properties, Inc., as well as a town center, commercial district, and tourism-related facilities.

Megaworld President and Chief Executive Officer Lourdes Gutierrez-Alfonso said the township aims to attract tourists, visitors, and local residents, citing its proximity to the Bacolod-Silay Airport Road.

“Our vision for this new township in Negros Occidental is to provide new opportunities to help boost tourism in the province,” she said.

The site will be less than five minutes from Talisay City Hall and about 15 minutes from the Bacolod City Government Center.

Megaworld’s expansion in Negros Occidental reflects its confidence in the region’s growth, Alliance Global Group, Inc. President and Chief Executive Officer Kevin L. Tan said.

“With the Negros Island Region already in place, the future of this province is bright and we have seen the rise of mixed-use developments not just in the capital but also in other towns and cities,” he said.

The Negros Island Region’s economy grew by 5.9% in 2024, faster than the national average of 5.7%, according to data from the Philippine Statistics Authority.

Megaworld reported a 1.16% increase in third-quarter attributable net income to P5.23 billion, driven by the strong performance of its hotel and residential segments.

On Monday, Megaworld Corp. shares rose by 1.85% or four centavos to close at P2.20 apiece. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**



PHILIPPINE STAR/TLE PHOTO

# GCash rolls out in-app OTPs to curb fraud

ELECTRONIC wallet platform GCash has launched in-app one-time passwords (OTPs) to strengthen account security against phishing, scams, and fraud.

“Our upgrade to In-App OTPs is a strategic move to put an end to phishable SMS OTPs. We will shift users to instant, GCash app-verified authentication, to increase the security of their daily transactions,” GCash Chief Information Security Officer Miguel Geronilla said in a media release on Monday.

By the first quarter, users will receive OTPs directly through secure push notifications within the GCash application, instead of via text messages, the company said.

GCash said SMS-based OTPs have been a frequent target of scammers seeking unauthorized access to user accounts, adding that in-app OTPs are designed to address these vulnerabilities.

“By sending OTP requests directly to the user’s authenticated GCash app, GCash ensures that only the intended users can receive and use the unique OTPs, protecting them from unauthorized access,” the company said.

GCash also said the new system allows one-tap authentication, eliminating the need for users to switch applications or wait for OTPs delivered through text messages.

“In-App OTPs reflect commitment of GCash to providing secure, seamless financial services for its millions of users and set a new benchmark for digital finance security in the Philippines,” it said.

In December, Globe Telecom, Inc. and GCash announced the completion of initial tests for the implementation of a silent authentication system.

A silent authentication system verifies users through a secured network, replacing the need for one-time passwords.

Globe Fintech Innovations, Inc. (Mynt), the operator of GCash, is a partnership among Globe, Ayala Corp., and Ant International, a digital payments, digi-

tization, and financial technology provider.

Last year, Globe and Bank of the Philippine Islands also announced that they are developing a proof of concept for silent network authentication to combat fraud.

The technology verifies a user’s identity by checking whether the mobile number provided matches the SIM card active in the current data session, Globe said, describing it as a powerful layer of defense against phishing and other SIM-based fraud.

At the local bourse on Monday, shares in Globe closed unchanged at P1,620 each. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**