

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

7,343.96

▲ 120.13 PTS.

▲ 1.66%

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2022

BusinessWorld

PSEI MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P866.00 +P13.00 +1.52%	ACEN AC Energy Corp. P9.56 +P0.06 +0.63%	AEV Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P60.85 +P0.75 +1.25%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P12.56 +P0.06 +0.48%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P35.95 +P0.25 +0.70%	AP Aboitiz Power Corp. P31.80 +P0.90 +2.91%	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P130.00 +P2.80 +2.20%	BLOOM Blossom Resorts Corp. P6.47 +P0.09 +1.41%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P95.00 +P0.30 +0.32%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P31.30 +P0.15 +0.48%
GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P3,354.00 +P74.00 +2.26%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P567.00 +P11.00 +1.98%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P211.40 +P8.40 +4.14%	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P230.00 +P5.00 +2.22%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P60.50 +P2.50 +4.31%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P10.06 +P0.13 +1.31%	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P58.90 +P1.40 +2.43%	MEG Megaworld Corp. P3.19 +P0.02 +0.63%	MER Manila Electric Co. P313.60 +P4.20 +1.36%	MPI Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P3.91 +P0.01 +0.26%
PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P37.50 ---	RLC Robinsons Land Corp. P19.28 +P0.16 +0.84%	RRHI Robinsons Retail Holdings, Inc. P58.00 -P0.20 -0.34%	SECB Security Bank Corp. P112.00 +P1.00 +0.90%	SM SM Investments Corp. P968.00 +P18.00 +1.89%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P112.30 +P0.30 +0.27%	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P34.85 +P0.70 +2.05%	TEL PLDT, Inc. P1,881.00 +P21.00 +1.13%	URC Universal Robina Corp. P126.00 -P0.50 -0.40%	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P28.15 -P0.40 -1.40%

Tech talent, skilled professionals seen in demand

New businesses, digitalization, growing financial sector spur this year's job needs

TECHNOLOGY talent and professionals skilled in business management, sales, and finance are expected to be in high demand in the Philippines this year as a result of new businesses, digitalization, and the growth of the financial sector, recruitment firm Robert Walters Philippines said.

Many Philippine-based companies will need more tech talent with expertise in automation, data analytics, cloud, and 5G, or fifth-generation technology, said Robert Walters Philippines

Country Manager Nic Sephton-Poultny, citing the findings of the company's Salary Survey 2022.

Conducted in September last year, the Salary Survey, he said, is based on an analysis of placements made across Robert Walters network of offices and specialist disciplines in 2021. "Insights are drawn both from the consultants' interactions, in their respective countries, with companies as well as candidates whom they have placed."

Risk, finance operations, and front office workers will also

be in high demand in 2022, Mr. Sephton-Poultny said during a virtual media discussion on Tuesday, citing the emergence of new businesses, digitalization, and the growing financial sector.

Because of the public health crisis, employment candidates' priorities today have also shifted, with many of them now focusing on base salaries rather than allowances or variable bonuses, according to the recruitment firm.

"Companies should also note that healthcare benefits are extremely

critical, and many candidates will prioritize offers from companies that provide healthcare to employees along with their dependents," Mr. Sephton-Poultny said.

"Candidates may also be likely to accept an offer if the salary is slightly lesser but includes healthcare coverage for the whole family," he added.

Filipino workers also prefer work-from-home setups or flexible arrangements.

For companies to attract and retain employees, hiring

managers are encouraged to accommodate flexibility or work-from-home arrangements, Mr. Sephton-Poultny noted.

"We have seen many employees leave or candidates reject offers when organizations require them to work in the office with no option for hybrid or work-from-home arrangements. This is highly prevalent in the Philippines, and we can expect that to continue in 2022."

At the same time, Robert Walters' survey findings showed that in 2022, employees who stay with

their current employers can expect salary increases of between 4% to 8%.

"Job movers can expect to receive 15% to 20% increases, though niche and technical positions can receive up to 30% or 35% increments," the recruitment firm noted.

Mr. Sephton-Poultny also said that there have been exceptionally high salary increments of up to 70% for job movers in tech positions because of the war for talent in the country. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

AirAsia: Travelers now prefer contactless procedures



LOW-COST carrier Philippines AirAsia, Inc. on Tuesday said that most Filipino travelers now prefer contactless solutions, especially for passenger boarding and booking process.

Citing a survey it commissioned in December 2021, the airline said that "62% of Filipinos traveling in the next 180 days have contactless travel touchpoints as among their prime concerns, followed by value for money and better flight timing."

The low-cost carrier hired Tangere, a big-data analytics firm, to conduct a survey of 1,605 respondents aged 18 to 60 years old from Metro Manila, balanced Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

"The recent survey revealed that this pivot to contactless solutions is in agreement with current traveling behavior as 31% of the travelers said they use mobile e-wallets in purchasing their tickets," the airline noted.

It also said that 29% of the respondents use their credit cards, while 18% use other forms of mobile and internet banking.

"For the travelers, using non-contact payments helps promote a convenient and time saving, more secure and safe transaction."

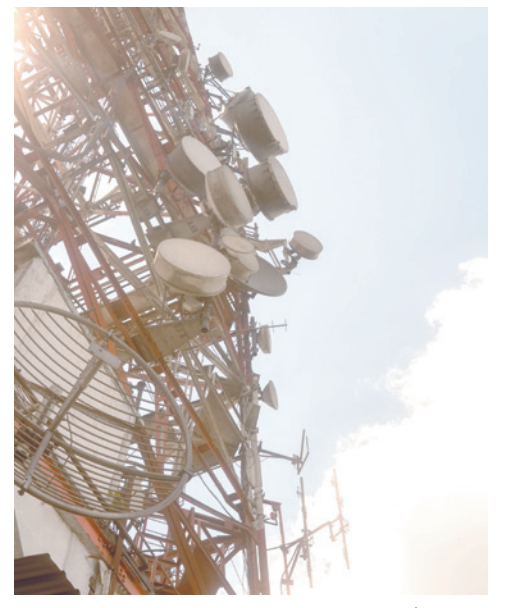
Only 6% of the respondents indicated that they would pay in cash, while 2% still prefer over-the-counter payments.

"Guests who book their tickets online also prefer to access the airline's website via their mobile phones (43%) and their laptop or computer (37%)," the airline noted.

"Another 27% said they would also use the airline's mobile app if available," it added.

The airline intends to launch this year a facial recognition technology for contactless check-in procedure.

The service is expected to "add another layer of health and safety protection for AirAsia guests as the app would only require them to take a selfie, upload a copy of their passport or national ID and go through a one-time verification process at the check-in counter," Philippines AirAsia said. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**



JACKSON DAVID/UNSPASH

Aboitiz Construction to build storage for grain company

ABOITIZ Construction, Inc. said it plans to begin the construction of local storage for Mariveles Grains Corp. to help stabilize the logistics of grain importation.

According to a press release on Tuesday, it started the early stages of pier rehabilitation and was awarded the threshold facilities located in Mariveles, Bataan.

"Through this project, we aim to help in improving the logistics of grain products and contribute to our local food industry. This project also highlights our expertise in building infrastructures that involve different areas of civil works," Aboitiz Construction Vice-President for Business Development Levi B. Agoncillo said in a statement.

The project started in November 2021 and is expected to be completed in the fourth quarter of this year.

Aboitiz Construction said it is planning to prolong the stability of the piers, which is the main structure in the loading and unloading of grain products in the area.

Mariveles Grains operates a grain and commodities terminal that handles the storage and distribution of imported bulk grains.

The terminal can handle deliveries from Panamax vessels at a rate of 8,000 to 10,000 metric tons (MT) per day.

The grains provider is one of the subsidiaries of La Filipina Uy Gongco Corp., a livestock and agribusiness company. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocsion**

AboitizPower's P10-B bonds receive highest credit rating

ABOITIZ Power Corp. on Tuesday told the stock exchange that its fixed-rate retail bonds received the highest credit rating with a stable outlook from the Philippine Rating Services Corp. (PhilRatings).

The PRS Aaa rating was assigned to the company's proposed issuance worth P10 billion, the third and last tranche of its P30-billion bonds registered under the shelf registration program filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on March 1, 2021.

The third tranche is comprised of up to P7 billion with an oversubscription option of up to P3 billion. The credit rating given to it means the debt obligation is of the highest quality and carries minimal credit risk based on PhilRatings' long-term issue credit rating scale.

PhilRatings also gave AboitizPower's bonds a stable outlook, which means the

rating is most likely to be maintained in the next 12 months.

The credit rating agency noted the following key rating factors it used to assign the ratings to AboitizPower's bonds: diversified portfolio with good growth prospects; experienced management team; sustained financial recovery, and sufficient liquidity levels, supported by continued strong cash flow generation.

On Jan. 11, the energy company sought approval from the SEC for the issuance of the P10-billion bonds as it eyes the public offering in the first quarter of this year.

The proceeds of the bonds will be used to refinance the company's previously issued bonds and to fund the construction of future renewable energy projects.

At the local bourse on Tuesday, AboitizPower gained 90 centavos or 2.91% to close at P31.80 apiece. — **Marielle C. Lucenio**

China Telecom's local venture seeks to double subscribers

CHINA Telecommunications Corp.'s Philippine venture may double its subscribers this year to reach a target to secure a third of the nation's communications market as early as 2024.

Subscribers of DITO Telecommunity Corp., which began operations in March, may climb to about 10 million from 5.3 million at the end of last year as the company expands network coverage, according to majority stakeholder DITO CME Holdings Corp.

The company predicts it can attract customers to its solely 4G and 5G network, and wants to avoid getting into a price war with larger domestic rivals Globe Telecom, Inc. and PLDT, Inc., DITO CME President Eric Alberto said in an interview.

"Everyone who needs a mobile phone already has one," Mr. Alberto said. "We're just upgrading to a more sophisticated digital capability."

The company reaffirmed a goal to reach 30% market share, with Mr. Alberto forecasting that could be achieved in 2024 when its network coverage rises to more than 80% of the population from 52.8% last year.

DITO CME, which is undergoing a stock rights offer, is "down to the final stretch" of securing long-term credit to fund a \$5-billion five-year investment commitment to build its network, Joseph John Ong, chief finance officer, said.

The company and China Telecom, which holds 40% of DITO Telecommunity, will guarantee the debt based on their stakes in the unit.

The telecom venture may take three to five years to be profitable, Mr. Alberto said. Other units such as marketing firm Global Acuity and analytics solutions provider Unalytics may take less time to make significant earnings contributions compared to rival telecoms' businesses, he said. — **Bloomberg**

Medilines extends distribution partnership with Siemens Healthineers

MEDILINES Distributors, Inc. renewed its partnership with Siemens Healthineers, extending by three more years the listed trading firm's sale and distribution of diagnostic imaging devices and specialized molecular imaging equipment.

"Our partnership with Siemens Healthineers started in 2016 and is now on its third renewal. This reflects Siemens' confidence in Medilines' established name in the Philippine healthcare industry, market dominance, and proven expertise in providing high quality medical devices to hospitals nationwide," Medilines Chairman Virgilio B. Villar said in a media release.

The contract involves the sale and distribution of Siemens Healthineers' flagship division, which includes products such as CT scans, MRIs, x-rays, and PET/CTs.

Medilines has also sold and distributed equipment from Varian, which was acquired by Siemens Healthineers in April.

Varian is an American company specializing in cancer care technologies, such as the linear accelerator, which is a high-tech machine used for radiation treatments for cancer patients.

According to the press release, Medilines and Siemens Healthineers sold majority of the current installations of lin-

ear accelerators and imaging systems for radiation therapy in the Philippines.

"Medilines is currently installing more linear accelerators in Cebu, Daguapan and Iloilo, and is also preparing to install in Philippine General Hospital. The company is also about to finish an installation in Sacred Heart Medical Center in Pampanga, one of the biggest privately-owned cancer centers in Central Luzon," the company said in a statement.

"In the last five years, Medilines has sold more than 10 units of linear accelerators nationwide. To date, Medilines holds the title of distributor with the most number of installations of lin-

ear accelerators in the Philippines," it added.

In 2020, Medilines claims to have represented 90% of the market share in the distribution of cancer therapy equipment in the country.

"[We] expect to retain dominance in this growing category, which contributes around P1 billion in sales every year in the past years, as [we] are set to install at least five more linear accelerators this year. With these, [we] expect to grow this segment by more than 20% versus last year," the company added.

On Tuesday, Medilines shares dropped three centavos or 2.54% to P1.15 each. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocsion**