BusinessWorld
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Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) 7,452.82 ▲ 142.88 PTS. ▲ 1.95%

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PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC	Ayala Corp.	P860.00	——	
ACEN	AC Energy Corp.	P8.80	+P0.60	+7.32%
AEV	Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc.	P63.00	+P2.10	+3.45%
AGI	Alliance Global Group, Inc.	P13.18	+P0.38	+2.97%
ALI	Ayala Land, Inc.	P38.90	+P1.10	+2.91%
AP	Aboitiz Power Corp.	P35.90	+P0.40	+1.13%
BDO	BDO Unibank, Inc.	P136.00	+P0.10	+0.07%
BLOOM	Bloomberry Resorts Corp.	P6.55	+P0.34	+5.48%
BPI	Bank of the Philippine Islands	P100.00	+P1.00	+1.01%
CNVRG	Converge ICT Solutions, Inc.	P27.55	+P2.05	+8.04%
GLO	Globe Telecom, Inc.	P2,790.00	+P70.00	+2.57%
GTCAP	GT Capital Holdings, Inc.	P577.00	+P24.50	+4.43%
ICT	International Container Terminal Services, Inc.	P217.80	+P1.80	+0.83%
JFC	Jollibee Foods Corp.	P251.00	+P2.20	+0.88%
JGS	JG Summit Holdings, Inc.	P61.20	+P1.75	+2.94%
LTG	LT Group, Inc.	P9.43	+P0.04	+0.43%
MBT	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	P59.70	+P0.90	+1.53%
MEG	Megaworld Corp.	P3.36	+P0.11	+3.38%
MER	Manila Electric Co.	P361.00	+P2.00	+0.56%
MPI	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	P3.69	+P0.09	+2.50%
PGOLD	Puregold Price Club, Inc.	P36.15	+P0.65	+1.83%
RLC	Robinsons Land Corp.	P18.70	+P0.60	+3.31%
RRHI	Robinsons Retail Holdings, Inc.	P59.80	+P1.55	+2.66%
SECB	Security Bank Corp.	P116.00	+P2.10	+1.84%
SM	SM Investments Corp.	P937.00	-P3.00	-0.32%
SMC	San Miguel Corp.	P109.50	+P1.00	+0.92%
SMPH	SM Prime Holdings, Inc.	P38.50	+P2.00	+5.48%
TEL	PLDT, Inc.	P1,810.00	+P58.00	+3.31%
URC	Universal Robina Corp.	P127.80	+P1.80	+1.43%
WLCON	Wilcon Depot, Inc.	P27.05	——	

CREIT moves debut after 'voluminous transactions'

By Keren Concepcion G. Valmonte *Reporter*

CITICORE Energy REIT Corp. (CREIT) deferred its listing at the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) due to "voluminous transactions arising from the huge number of retail and individual investors."

In a statement on Wednesday, the company said the strong investor demand for the P6.4-billion initial public offering (IPO) of the country's first energy-focused real estate investment trust (REIT) slowed its processing time.

CREIT's market debut was initially scheduled Feb. 17. It has yet to confirm a new listing date as of press time.

"We are grateful to the overwhelming reception of investors, owing also to the extensive market education conducted, which further increased appreciation for REITs as a new asset class," CREIT President and Chief Executive Officer Oliver Y. Tan said.

The company said all shares allotted for its institutional, trading participants, and local small investors (LSIs) tranches were oversubscribed.

"In as much as the underwriters wanted to accommodate all interested investors, the strong orders for CREIT's IPO from local and international institutions and more than 5,000 retail investors simply outnumbered the total shares offered to the public," Unicapital, Inc. First Vice-President for Corporate Finance Pamela Louise Q. Victoriano said.

"The underwriters nonetheless exerted efforts to distribute the shares as widely as possible to a broad investor base to hopefully result to better liquidity and more active trading," she added.

CREIT said the local small investors (LSI) tranche of the offer was oversubscribed by 124.09%. The company received a demand of 270.745 million shares for 218.182 million shares allocated for the LSI tranche.

"For the LSI investors who were not able to participate in the country's first energy REIT or received partial allocations, rest assured that refunds for those who placed and paid for their orders but were not allocated are being promptly processed by the Underwriters and the Receiving Agent," Mr. Tan said.

CREIT sold 2.509 billion shares for P2.55 apiece. Based on projected earnings, the company is expected to have a dividend yield of 7% in 2022 and 7.4% in 2023.

The company said it is looking to implement a dividend payout of at least 95% of its distributable income for the preceding year.

MPTC unit starts construction of P2.7-B toll road in Indonesia

METRO Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) announced on Wednesday that its subsidiary, Metro Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC), is constructing a $53-million (around P2.7 billion) toll road in Indonesia.

PT Bintaro Serpong Damai, one of the indirect subsidiaries of MPTC in Indonesia, held the groundbreaking for the project on Feb. 7, MPIC said in a disclosure to the stock exchange.

MPTC owns a majority interest in PT Bintaro Serpong Damai, a toll road business entity.

The toll road project is approximately 3.2 kilometers long and provides direct access to the Makassar Port in South Sulawesi, a province in the southern peninsula of Sulawesi, Indonesia.

MPIC said the toll road project is expected to "encourage economic growth, aid in the distribution, logistics and the facilitation of export and import routes, as well as ease the congestion of traffic for the delivery of goods and logistics transportation with its direct access to the Makassar Port."

The project, which is a national strategic project of the government of Indonesia and is being implemented by the Ministry of Public Works and Public Housing of Indonesia through the PT Bintaro Serpong Damai, will be implemented in three stages, according to the company.

It is targeted to be completed in early 2023.

In the Philippines, MPTC expects to open the Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway (CCLEX) project to motorists within the first quarter of the year.

Aside from CCLEX, MPTC holds the concession rights for Cavite–Laguna Expressway (CALAX), Manila–Cavite Expressway (CAVITEX), Circumferential Road 5 (C-5) Link Expressway, North Luzon Expressway (NLEX), NLEX Connector Road, Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX), and Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway (CCLEX).

It also expects to complete this year the NLEX Connector Phase 1, CALAX Cavite Segment, NLEX Segment 8.2 Section 1A, NLEX Connector Phase 2, and CAVITEX C5 Link projects.

SHARE BUYBACK

Meanwhile, MPIC also announced on Wednesday that its board of directors had approved the implementation of a share buyback program of up to P5 billion commencing on Feb. 17.

"The purpose for the share buyback program is to enhance and improve shareholder value and to manifest confidence in the company's value and prospects through the repurchase of its common shares," MPIC said in a separate disclosure.

The company also noted that its buyback transactions will be triggered in cases where its "stock is deemed to be substantially undervalued, when there is high volatility in share prices, or in any other instance where a buyback would serve to enhance or improve shareholder value."

MPIC is one of three key Philippine units of First Pacific, the others being Philex Mining Corp. and PLDT, Inc.

Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has a majority stake in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls.

MPIC shares closed 2.50% higher at P3.96 apiece on Wednesday. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

Jollibee to launch Edinburgh and Glasgow stores

JOLLIBEE Foods Corp. (JFC) is set to open two stores in Scotland, with stores located in areas with a "large student presence and [an] active youth community."

"This is an important moment for us as we introduce Jollibee to Scotland with not only one but two restaurants launching within a month, showing our commitment to expand in Europe," JFC President and Chief Executive Officer Ernesto Tanmantiong said in a statement on Wednesday.

In April last year, the company said it wanted to have 50 stores across Europe in the next five years. The company said it had allotted €50 million for its expansion in the continent.

The listed fastfood giant said it is opening a store at 136 Princes Street in Edinburgh on Feb. 24, Thursday. Meanwhile, the second store will be located in Glasgow and will open on March 25, Friday.

JFC said both its Edinburgh and Glasgow stores will serve halal meat "to cater to all communities in both cities."

"We are optimistic that opening now in Scotland is an opportune time for Jollibee and will bring customers something different and exciting. Most people have not been able to try new things in the last few years, so bringing the fun, joyful, and colorful Jollibee restaurant to customers will be a great start to 2022," said Adam Parkinson, JFC's business head for Europe.

Jollibee has over 1,500 stores in 17 countries. The brand has several stores in the United Kingdom, which are located in London, Cardiff, Newcastle, Nottingham, Liverpool, Leeds, Reading, and Leicester Square.

The company said sales from its UK stores rose 417% in the last 18 months.

JFC shares at the stock market closed higher by 0.88% or P2.20 to finish at P251 apiece. — **Keren Concepcion G. Valmonte**

SEC OK's offerings of Bank of Commerce, San Miguel Corp.

THE Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on Wednesday said it "has considered favorably" the public offerings of Bank of Commerce and San Miguel Corp. (SMC).

"In its Feb. 15 meeting, the Commission En Banc resolved to render effective the registration statements of Bank of Commerce and SMC covering 1,403,013,920 common shares and up to P60 billion in fixed-rate bonds under shelf registration, respectively, subject to their compliance with certain remaining requirements," the SEC said in a statement.

BANK OF COMMERCE IPO

SMC subsidiary Bank of Commerce is planning a P3.5-billion initial public offering (IPO), while SMC will be offering up to P30-billion fixed-rate bonds in an initial tranche of the shelf-registered bonds.

Bank of Commerce will be selling to the public over 280.6 million common shares for P12.50 at most. The SEC said the company might net P3.34 billion from the offer.

According to the latest timetable submitted to the SEC, Bank of Commerce plans to conduct its IPO from March 7 to 16, while its listing at the main board of the Philippine Stock Exchange is slated for March 23.

Proceeds from Bank of Commerce's IPO will be used to fund its lending activities, acquisition of investment securities, and to finance capital expenditure requirements, which involve upgrading its ATM fleet and its core banking system.

As of Sept. 30, 2021, Bank of Commerce had 140 branches and 257 ATMs.

The company tapped BDO Capital & Investment Corp., China Bank Capital Corp., Philippine Commercial Capital, Inc. (PCCI), and PNB Capital Investment Corp. as joint issue managers, joint lead underwriters, and joint bookrunners for the offer.

SMC BOND OFFERING

SMC can issue the P60-billion fixed-rate bonds in one or more tranches within three years. The initial tranche is worth 30 billion, comprised of P25-billion five-year Series J bonds due 2027 and an overallotment option of up to P5-billion seven-year Series K bonds due 2029.

According to the latest timetable submitted to the SEC, the first tranche bonds will be offered at face value and will be listed at the Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. on March 1.

Should the overallotment option be exercised, SMC may net up to P29.63 billion from the offer. Proceeds will be used to refinance short-term loans of the company as well as for general corporate purposes.

SMC engaged BDO Capital and China Bank Capital to be the offer's joint issue managers and will be joined by BPI Capital Corp., PCCI, PNB Capital, RCBC Capital Corp., and SB Capital Investment Corp. as joint lead underwriters and bookrunners of the transaction. — **Keren Concepcion G. Valmonte**

Budget carrier Cebu Pacific increases int'l flights as gov't eases restrictions

BUDGET carrier Cebu Pacific said it recently resumed thrice weekly flights to Bangkok, as well as weekly flights to Fukuoka and Jakarta.

This is response to the Philippine government's decision to make it easier for travelers to come to the country amid a global health crisis, the airline said in a statement e-mailed to reporters on Tuesday.

"Fully vaccinated passengers from visa-free countries can [now] visit the [Philippines] for business or leisure purposes, and are no longer required to observe mandatory facility-based quarantine upon arrival, as long as they present a negative RT-PCR (reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction) test result taken 48 hours prior arrival," the budget carrier noted.

The airline also intends to resume flights to other international routes from Manila in March, including Ho Chi Minh (Saigon) on March 1 and Taipei on March 2.

At the same time, it plans to resume its daily Dubai-Manila flights starting March 1 after the United Arab Emirates lifted capacity restrictions.

"We continue to bank on the rebound of domestic tourism this year while remaining agile in addressing demand for international travel as well," Cebu Pacific Chief Commercial Officer Xander Lao said.

"We are encouraged that with these positive indicators, more OFWs (overseas Filipino workers) can also fly back home easily and safely to their families," he added.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has said the Philippine government's move to open its borders to fully vaccinated foreign travelers will help facilitate the recovery of the aviation industry and the tourism sector.

But it also noted that more measures are needed to boost passenger confidence in air travel.

"We urge the Philippine government to take the following additional actions: make permanent the standardization of measures and exemption of quarantine, improving from the current temporary suspension; accept antigen tests for pre-departure testing; recognize digital vaccination certificates and testing certificates that are presented on digital platforms, such as the IATA Travel Pass," Philip Goh, IATA's regional vice-president for Asia-Pacific, said in a statement. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

SM Supermalls sees full recovery by next year

SM SUPERMALLS is projecting the full recovery of its shopping mall chain from the economic effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic by 2023, according to its president.

SM Supermalls President Steven T. Tan said 2022 will be focused on recovery, with the mall chain recording a double-digit increase for the first two months of the year.

"Should I say that we are already back at pre-pandemic level? I don't think so. This (2022) will be the year of recovery. Little by little, but we are not far from where we were in 2019. We're expecting this most probably to recover fully by 2023," Mr. Tan said in a recent interview on One News.

SM Supermalls is owned by listed property firm SM Prime Holdings, Inc.

Further, Mr. Tan said the mall chain's occupancy rate has not declined amid the mobility restrictions and operating capacity guidelines set by the government due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our occupancy rate has not really dropped. We have maintained a healthy (rate), around 85% to 90% occupancy all throughout the pandemic. As a matter of fact, there are still a lot of new tenants that are opening even during the pandemic," Mr. Tan said.

Mr. Tan also disclosed that retailers are "very bullish" with the country's economy despite the pandemic.

"When the pandemic hit in 2020, definitely it really hit us. It hit everyone. We were down by nearly 50% of our revenue. We were definitely affected. However, what we saw was there was a constant increase year on year. [In] 2021, [we] definitely did much better, double-digit growth from 2020," Mr. Tan said.

Malacañang previously announced that the National Capital Region (NCR) remains under Alert Level 2 until Feb. 28. Alert Level 2 has been implemented in NCR since the beginning of February.

Under the said alert level, establishments are permitted to have 50% indoor capacity and 70% outdoor capacity. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**