

Two Chinese firms vie for P74-B bus system project

By Arjay L. Balinbin
Senior Reporter

THE Transportation department said two Chinese companies recently submitted bids for the P73.93-billion bus system project in Davao City.

“Two international bidders from China — China International Water & Electric Corp. and China Railway 21st Bureau Group Co., Ltd. — submitted bids for

all three contract packages,” the Department of Transportation (DoTr) said in a recent statement to *BusinessWorld*, when asked for an update.

The department said it plans to award the contracts “in April.”

China International Water & Electric is an engineering company that works in the fields of water, hydropower, new energy, and infrastructure.

Meanwhile, China Railway 21st Bureau Group is a company that builds railway complexes, build-

ings, roads, tunnels, and bridges, among others.

The Transportation department started inviting bidders in November last year, through the Procurement Service of the Department of Budget and Management (PS-DBM), for the design, construction, and completion of the Davao Public Transport Modernization Project, also known as the Davao High Priority Bus System Project.

The department sought bidders for three contract packages, including a contract that covers

the construction of Buhangin Depot, Calinan Depot, and Calinan Driving School.

The second contract is for the Toril Depot and Terminal, Bunawan Terminal, and Calinan Terminal, while the third contract covers the civil works along bus routes, including bus stops, bus lanes, and other pedestrian improvement works.

The DoTr said the government had applied for financing from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

The deadline for bid submission was originally set for Jan. 6, but was

later extended to Feb. 10 “to provide prospective bidders sufficient time to evaluate the bid documents and attachments and be able to prepare better bids,” the PS-DBM said in a general bid bulletin.

The pre-bid conference took place on Nov. 26. In its presentation, the bids and awards committee said that the project is part of the transport road map of the City Government of Davao, and is intended to replace jeepneys.

The bus system will have 29 routes with a total route network of

672 kilometers, operating on over 580 kilometers of roads, and traversing the entirety of Davao City.

It will be delivered via a combination of diesel and electric bus fleets.

The project is expected to commence operations in August 2023.

Former Transportation Assistant Secretary Goddes Hope O. Libiran told *BusinessWorld* in December that the civil works component will cost P19.71 billion, while the bus fleet, both diesel and electric, will cost P21.17 billion.



Meralco Expands Its Cainta Substation – Seen in photos are Meralco personnel during the commissioning of a new 83-MVA power transformer bank no. 3 located in its Cainta Substation situated along Ortigas Avenue Extension, Barangay Sto. Domingo, Cainta, Rizal. This project was implemented to provide additional capacity, switching flexibility, and reliability during contingencies to the areas of Cainta and the nearby cities of Pasig and Marikina. This project will also address the additional load required by new large load customers

in the area such as SmithKline Beecham Research Limited (SBRL), Urban Deca Ortigas Mall, SM Charm Residence, and Pharmaserv, a COVID-19 vaccine storage facility located in Marikina. Despite the continued implementation of community quarantine measures or the new alert level system throughout the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Meralco and its subsidiaries are continuously working hard to improve its distribution system in order to provide safe, adequate, and reliable electric service to its customers.



Two Filipino Kids Named among the Top 10 Young Storytellers by Scholastic Asia

Two Filipino kids were among the 10 children across Asia who were awarded the 2021 Scholastic Asia Young Storytellers Award (SAYSA). The virtual awarding ceremony was held on the 22nd of January, 2022.

Cassandra Ysabel Ignacio and Phoebe Niguidula were among the 10 who best delighted the SAYSA judges who chose from the 70 finalists shortlisted from more than 1,700 participants. Scholastic Asia received read aloud entries from China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam.

The SAYSA judges were Ms. Selina Lee, Vice President of Scholastic Asia, Ms. Christabel Pinto, Senior Director, Global Literacy Program of Room to Read, Ms. Catherine Wu, Scholastic Asia's Reading Ambassador, and Mr. Peter H. Reynolds, Award-winning Author and Illustrator.

Among the 70 SAYSA finalists were these 14 Filipino kids, selected through public voting and judging by Scholastic Asia:

Cassandra Ysabel Ignacio, *St. Scholastica's Academy of Marikina*; **Eeva Cambria Bazar**, *Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic School*; **Haquila Guevarra**, *San Sebastian School, Inc.*; **Jairo Stian Realizo**, *School of Saint Anthony*; **Kayla Nevah Donnateza Caparas**, *Casa Del Niño Montessori & Science High*; **Keizha Christine Salvosa**, *Good Shepherd Cathedral School*; **Lady Alyssa Kate Tan**, *Sacred Heart School - Ateneo de Cebu*; **Luke Adrienne Amaro**, *School of Saint Anthony*; **Phoebe Niguidula**, *St. Scholastica's Academy of Marikina*; **Vernice May Bautista**, *Our Lady of Perpetual Succor College*; **Wyanett Doydoy**, *New Era University (Pampanga Branch)*; **Yasmin Binte Mohamed Yasin**, *Asia Academic Integrated School*; **Ysabel Tampus**, *Our Lady of Perpetual Succor College*; **Zairich Althea Castillo**, *aps Achiever Private School*

Scholastic launched the Scholastic Asia Young Storytellers Award (SAYSA) in October 2021, leveraging the use of the digital space to provide a platform for children to showcase

their many talents. SAYSA invited readers aged 4 to 10 years to express their creativity through storytelling.

Scholastic wants to encourage children in Asia to be confident as they narrate and read from their favorite Scholastic storybook while instilling a competitive spirit and a sense of camaraderie among peers. Moreover, Scholastic wants children to be able to share with other kids their love for books and reading.

With the successful inauguration of the Scholastic Asia Young Storytellers Award, Scholastic Asia has announced that SAYSA 2022 will be in October.

For over 100 years now, Scholastic has been championing a love for reading and learning all over the world. In the Philippines, Scholastic is partners with over 250 schools in its Reading and Math Programs – PRIME English and PRIME Mathematics. In PRIME English, reading aloud to students by their teachers, parents, and peers is integral in nurturing students' comprehension and critical thinking skills, and instilling in them a love for reading. Scholastic Philippines is happy and proud that 9 out of the 14 Filipino kids who made it to Asia's Top 10, including Cassandra and Phoebe, are from among its current partner schools in PRIME English.

Scholastic Philippines is sharing the 14 SAYSA read aloud videos from the Philippines to the public as part of the WORLD READ ALOUD DAY (WRAD) Celebration in February. The videos may be viewed on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmqSEvEhhWSB2ySOs3y1W9A/videos>

As part of the WRAD Campaign, Scholastic Philippines is also sponsoring the Scholastic Voice of the Youth Awards – interschool contests amplifying the voice of the Filipino youth through reading, writing, and speaking. The contests are open to Scholastic's partners in PRIME English.

For more information about Scholastic's programs, please visit scholasticph.com.

MPTC says Mobility unit to have 'less than a billion' for projects

METRO Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC) said it is allocating “less than a billion” for its subsidiary MPT Mobility this year, mainly for the latter's digital solutions.

“We are, for this year, budgeting less than a billion for capex (capital expenditure). This is for MPT Mobility,” MPTC President and Chief Executive Officer Rodrigo E. Franco said during a virtual briefing on Feb. 24.

“Unless there is going to be another gas station project that normally [requires] bigger capex because that involves, in many cases, land acquisition,” he added.

He said most of MPT Mobility's budget for the year will go to digital applications and solutions.

“That's how we are positioning MPT Mobility. It's going to be technologically driven and will be relying on digital solutions.”

MPT Mobility launched last week its MPT DriveHub, a smartphone application that houses the company's mobility solutions for customers.

“MPT DriveHub is going to be an important distribution channel for our mobility services because it will reach all the motorist customers, initially of our expressways but eventually everyone who is traveling,” Mr. Franco noted.

“MPT DriveHub is going to be an important channel to communicate with them and deliver our products,” he added.

MPT Mobility Vice-President for Business Development Mark Richmond M. De Leon said the company is already developing the application “to introduce more services in the future such as e-wallets, motorists' marketplace, and electric vehicle charging locator map to equip our motorists with more solutions.”

“We're open to partnerships and app integrations to accelerate the MPT DriveHub's service offerings,” he also said.

The application, which will be available on March 1, allows motorists to manage their trips through its three key features: RFID or radio-frequency identification transactions, trip planning, and roadside assistance.

Users of North Luzon Expressway, Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway, Manila-Cavite Expressway, Cavite-Laguna Expressway, and Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway will be able to use the application.

MPTC is the tollways unit of Metro Pacific Investments Corp., one of three key Philippine units of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd., 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. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

Robinsons Land's Giga Tower gets LEED Gold certification

ROBINSONS Land Corp. (RLC) said its Giga Tower received a Leadership in Energy and Environment Design (LEED) Gold certification, which is in line with the company's goal to incorporate sustainability features in its existing and future office projects.

“As the leading office building developer in the Pasig-Quezon City area, we are committed to building greener office towers and apply for LEED certification for these ongoing and upcoming Metro Manila projects, as well as some provincial offices,” RLC Senior Vice-President and Business Unit Manager Jericho P. Go said.

LEED provides companies with a framework for sustainability features in design, construction as well as operations and maintenance.

Located in the company's Bridgetowne Destination Estate, Giga Tower is the fourth RLC building to receive a LEED certification.

The company said it restored a third of Giga Tower's building site via native or adapted vegetation in a bid to promote biodiversity within the project.

Meanwhile, all the paving and roof areas of the building's covered

parking area comply with the Solar Reflectance Index.

Giga Tower has multiple energy-saving features. The building's LED lights, double-glazed facade, and its parking area's daylight sensors lead to lower energy consumption with a 9.5% energy cost savings.

Meanwhile, it also has an installed energy meter and energy sub-meters for energy management.

Giga Tower has low-flow and low flush plumbing fixtures, which allows indoor water use to be reduced by as much as 45.9%.

“There is also marked waste reduction due to the building's Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) which includes compartments for mixed paper, cardboard, glass, plastics, metals, batteries, and electronic wastes,” RLC said.

The tower also makes use of non-CFC refrigerant (R-410A) to reduce stratospheric ozone depletion. — **Keren Concepcion G. Valmonte**

FULL STORY

Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link <<https://bit.ly/3BWWwKA>>

Iligan Light and Power seeks nod for P142-M projects

ILIGAN Light and Power, Inc. has asked the Energy Regulatory

Commission (ERC) to approve its proposed electric and non-electric projects “to address load growth.”

“[The company has] several electric and non-electric capital projects planned which are necessary to maintain the reliable and safe operation of its distribution network as well as to provide for the growing electricity demand in the franchise area,” Iligan Light

said in its application filed with the regulator on Feb. 14.

In its filing, Iligan Light also submitted the breakdown of its proposed projects totaling to P142.4 million.

The biggest chunk of the budget, which is P39.48 million, will go to the construction of its Tubon 20/30 mega volt ampere (MVA) substation, a project carried over from its 2021 regulatory year and will be continued this year.

Iligan Light will also spend P23.64 million for line construction projects and P11.96 million to buy poles.

The projects, which are mostly covering improvement on safety, capacity, vehicles, and electrification, were from 2015 until 2021. If granted approval, Iligan Light can start the construction, implementation, ownership, or operations of the projects.

“The proposed electric and non-electric capital projects will

not have a direct impact on the current rates of [Iligan Light] until approved by the Honorable Commission as part of [its] Regulatory Asset Base in its next regulatory reset application under performance-based regulation,” the company said.

Iligan Light is among the largest private utilities in the country, covering Iligan City, Lanao del Norte province in Mindanao. — **Mariele C. Luceno**

OUTLIER Investors positive on SM Prime's upbeat earnings

MARKET players remained optimistic on SM Prime Holdings, Inc. (SMPH) following strong earnings results last week, dampened only after Russia invaded Ukraine.

A total of 41.35 million SM Prime shares worth P1.61 billion were traded from Feb. 21 to 24, data from the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) showed.

Financial markets were closed on Friday in commemoration of the People Power Revolution anniversary.

The share price of the Sy-led property developer closed at P38 apiece, down by 0.5% from Feb. 18's closing price of P38.20 per share. For the year, the stock has gone up by 13.4%.

Stock analysts attributed SM Prime's performance last week to its “upbeat” earnings report.

“SMPH's trading range was wholly dictated by sentiment over its [fiscal year 2021] earnings report. Investors bought up SMPH in the first half of the week as a reopening play amid talks of a lower alert level in the Metro,” Regina Capital Development Corp. Head of Research Luis A. Limlingan said in a Viber message, referring to the company's ticker symbol.

“SMPH's upbeat earnings surprised on the upside on the back of better-than-expected [fourth quarter 2021] leasing figures. It looks like because of this, market players revised upward their fair value estimates for the stock,” Mr. Limlingan added.

However, this was dampened by the escalating tensions between Russia and Ukraine, which “dragged performance of index issues across the board on Thursday,” China Bank Securities Corp. Research Associate Andrei Jorge G. Soriano said in a separate e-mail interview.

SM Prime's net income reached P6.2 billion in the fourth quarter of 2021, its disclosure to the local bourse showed without providing comparative figures. Revenues during the period rose by a fourth to P25.5 billion.

This brought the full-year bottom line to P21.8 billion last year, growing by 21% year on year. Its revenues were flat at P82.3 billion.

By market segment, its residential unit, led by SM Development Corp., posted P45.9 billion in revenues.

SM Prime's mall business' revenues improved a bit to P24.1 billion last year from P23.6 billion in 2020 as mobility restrictions were eased in Metro Manila and surrounding areas. Rent income likewise inched up by 6% to P23 billion.

Revenues from its other businesses, which include offices, hotels, and convention centers, increased by 4% to P6 billion.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin unleashed an invasion of Ukraine on Thursday, citing the need to “denazify” the latter's leadership as one of Mr. Putin's main reasons, which Ukraine and its Western allies dismissed as propaganda, Reuters reported.

This sent global stocks and US bond yields to dive on Thursday, while US dollar and gold rose. Brent oil surged past \$100 per barrel for the first time since 2014.

Mr. Limlingan expects the property firm to grow by 21% to net around P7.5 billion for the first three months of the year. He also forecasts a P25 billion in earnings for the entire 2022.

“With its residential segment staying robust, and the retail leasing segment continuing to improve, it is highly likely that the company will be able to sustain its double-digit growth figures this year and next,” Mr. Limlingan said.

For this week, he sees SM Prime's support and resistance levels of P37 and P40, respectively.

“We think that SMPH will likely continue pulling back over the coming week, especially given the weakness in market sentiment,” Mr. Soriano said.

He placed the company's immediate support and resistance at P37.30 and P40.00, respectively. — **Ana Olivia A. Tirona**