

## Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

7,212.23 ▼ 151.98 PTS. ▼ 2.06%

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2022

BusinessWorld

## PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

<b>AC</b> Ayala Corp. P849.00 -P11.00 -1.28%	<b>ACEN</b> AC Energy Corp. P08.21 -P0.44 -5.09%	<b>AEV</b> Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P59.95 -P1.85 -2.99%	<b>AGI</b> Alliance Global Group, Inc. P12.40 -P0.70 -5.34%	<b>ALI</b> Ayala Land, Inc. P37.20 -P1.00 -2.62%	<b>AP</b> Aboitiz Power Corp. P34.40 -P1.60 -4.44%	<b>BDO</b> BDO Unibank, Inc. P130.10 -P4.70 -3.49%	<b>BPI</b> Bank of the Philippine Islands P98.00 -P0.35 -0.36%	<b>CNVRG</b> Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P26.95 -P1.35 -4.77%	<b>EMP</b> Emperador, Inc. P19.90 -P0.30 -1.49%
<b>GLO</b> Globe Telecom, Inc. P2,698.00 -P4.00 -0.15%	<b>GTCAP</b> GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P570.00 -P20.00 -3.39%	<b>ICT</b> International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P210.00 -P6.00 -2.78%	<b>JFC</b> Jollibee Foods Corp. P236.00 -P10.20 -4.14%	<b>JGS</b> JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P62.45 -P1.35 -2.12%	<b>LTG</b> LT Group, Inc. P09.24 +P0.10 +1.09%	<b>MBT</b> Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P59.50 -P0.35 -0.58%	<b>MEG</b> Megaworld Corp. P03.24 -P0.07 -2.11%	<b>MER</b> Manila Electric Co. P363.00 -P3.00 -0.82%	<b>MPI</b> Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P03.80 -P0.03 -0.78%
<b>PGOLD</b> Puregold Price Club, Inc. P35.50 +P0.30 +0.85%	<b>RLC</b> Robinsons Land Corp. P19.00 -P0.30 -1.55%	<b>RRHI</b> Robinsons Retail Holdings, Inc. P58.60 -P0.20 -0.34%	<b>SECB</b> Security Bank Corp. P112.60 -P4.60 -3.92%	<b>SM</b> SM Investments Corp. P871.00 -P9.00 -1.02%	<b>SMC</b> San Miguel Corp. P108.60 +P0.30 +0.28%	<b>SMPH</b> SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P38.00 -P1.00 -2.56%	<b>TEL</b> PLDT, Inc. P1,800.00 -P10.00 -0.55%	<b>URC</b> Universal Robina Corp. P121.30 -P0.20 -0.16%	<b>WLCON</b> Wilcon Depot, Inc. P27.90 -P0.40 -1.41%

## Wilcon income up 23% on better profit margin

WILCON Depot, Inc. logged a 22.8% increase in net income to P692 million in the fourth quarter last year, as the retailer's gross profit margin improved with the higher contribution from its in-house brands.

"We delivered stronger quarter-on-quarter performance for the fourth quarter, which raised our net income for the year higher than initially expected," Wilcon Depot President and Chief Executive Officer Lorraine Belo-Cincochan said in a statement on Thursday.

Net sales during the quarter grew 9.1% to P7.47 billion from

P6.84 billion. The company said its depot-format stores made up for the majority or 97.2% of net sales.

Depot stores' contribution grew 9.3% or P616 million and accounted for P7.26 billion as the opening of three new depots during the quarter brought new store sales. Comparable sales "remained approximately flat" with a 0.8% growth rate.

Home Essentials stores made up 1.9% or P130 million of the company's total net sales. Sales from the segment went down 7.8% or P12 million year on year as comparable sales also declined 8%.

The company launched one new Home Essentials store in Central Luzon in the fourth quarter.

Meanwhile, its project sales went up 43.6% to P70 million.

Wilcon Depot's gross profit improved 21.2% in the fourth quarter to P2.84 billion from P2.35 billion. The company had a gross profit margin of 38.1%, improving 381 basis points year on year "as exclusive and in-house brands started its climb back up contributing 50.1% from the below 50% levels in the preceding three quarters and the 49.8% contribution for the same period in 2020."

For 2021, the company posted a 76.8% income jump to P2.56 billion from P1.45 billion the previous year.

Wilcon Depot said this was "driven mainly by the increase in net sales and the expansion of gross profit margin, partly offset by the increase in operating expenses."

The company's net sales for the year increased 21.6% to P27.51 billion as comparable sales went up 12.1%. The company logged an improved sales performance after stores in Luzon remained open despite the surge in coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) infections.

Sales from its depot stores made up for 97.4% or P26.79 billion of the company's net sales, while Home Essentials stores accounted for 1.9% to P530 million.

Last year, Wilcon Depot launched 10 stores, nine of which are in depot format and one is a Home Essentials branch. The company spent P2.16 billion in 2021, which was used mainly for the construction of new stores and warehouses.

Due to its store expansion, the company's operating expenses went up 16.8% to P7.2 billion.

"We are planning to add a minimum of eight stores in 2022 in line with our target to have 100 branches by the end of 2025," Ms. Belo-Cincochan said.

"Should the COVID-19 situation continue to improve during the year, we are expecting private construction to normalize and our annual sales growth to stabilize and return to pre-pandemic trend," she added.

Wilcon Depot shares at the stock exchange declined 1.41% or 40 centavos to close at P27.90 each. — **Keren Concepcion G. Valmonte**

## Globe proposes hike in capital stock to more than P11 billion

GLOBE Telecom, Inc. announced on Thursday its proposal to increase the company's authorized capital stock to P11.25 billion from P10.25 billion.

The amount will be divided into 168.93 million common shares with a par value of P50 per share, 160 million voting preferred shares with a par value of P5 per share, and 40 million nonvoting preferred shares with a par value of P50 per share, the

company said in a disclosure to the stock exchange.

Without giving details, the company said the move is "for business purposes."

Globe management expects approval of the company's board of directors "on or before April 25."

The company's annual stockholders' meeting will be held on April 26, and among the agenda is the approval of the amendments

to the articles of incorporation: seventh article — to increase the authorized capital stock.

Globe saw its core net income for 2021 grow by 9% to P21.2 billion from P19.5 billion in 2020.

Its full-year consolidated service revenues grew by 4% to P151.5 billion from the P146.4 billion reported in 2020.

The company attributed its growth to the "sustained outstanding performance of

home broadband as well as corporate data."

It invested P92.8 billion for capital expenditure (capex) projects last year. The total capex for 2021 represented 61% of gross service revenues and 124% of EBITDA, or earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, it said in a statement.

About 86% of the capex went to data-related requirements.

Globe's capex budget for 2022 will be around P89 billion, as it aims to continue expanding and improving its network, with increased funding for the rollout of the fiber network and the 5G (fifth-generation network) service.

Globe Telecom shares closed 0.15% lower at P2,698 apiece on Thursday. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

## Metro Pacific Tollways invests in mobility app for customers

METRO Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC) officially introduced on Thursday its MPT DriveHub, a smartphone application that houses the company's mobility solutions for customers.

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.

This means that users will be able to manage their RFID accounts, whether to check their balances or reload; calculate their toll fees to prepare payments ahead; know where the nearest pit stops are for dining, bathroom breaks, gas-ups, and shops; as well as get relevant traffic advisory and updates.

"MPT DriveHub allows users to immediately request for roadside assistance by readily having the expressway hotline number in the app, so help is one call away wherever you are on NLEX (North Luzon Expressway), SCTEX (Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway), and CAVITEX (Manila-Cavite Expressway) or CALAX (Cavite-Laguna Expressway)," the company said in a statement.

At a briefing, MPTC President and Chief Executive Officer Rodrigo E. Franco said the company's vision for the MPT DriveHub is "to become a superapp for motorists."

"It's going to be a superapp for all your mobility needs to make your journey and travel more pleasant," he added.

MPT Mobility Vice-President for Business Development Mark Richmond M. De Leon said the company is already developing the app "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.

MPTC noted that aside from NLEX, SCTEX, CAVITE, and CALAX, the application will also be available for Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway.

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**



SBITC facilitated the maiden call of the 2475 TEU-capacity MSC Sotiria III — one of the vessels operating MSC's expanded Seahorse service.

## ICTSI Subic now part of maritime giant MSC's Asian coverage

LISTED port operator International Container Terminal Services, Inc. (ICTSI) announced on Thursday the inclusion of its Subic port in the expanded service of Swiss-Italian maritime giant Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC).

Subic Bay International Terminal Corp.'s (SBITC) inclusion in the so-called Seahorse Service of MSC provides "industries in northern and central Luzon with a reliable link to global markets — especially Europe and the United States," ICTSI said in an e-mailed statement.

MSC is considered the world's largest shipping line in terms of capacity. It has access to an integrated network of road, rail and sea transport resources worldwide, ICTSI said.

It sails on more than 230 trade routes and calls over 500 ports.

The expanded service is seen to improve connection between Subic and Singapore, ICTSI said.

The updated service is expected to help speed up shipments of dry and reefer imports by MSC

from Europe, United States, Canada, South America and other long-haul markets.

"Aside from making regular calls in Subic, the updated service also calls North Port in Manila, which was already part of the previous port rotation," ICTSI said.

"The updated rotation covers Tanjung Pelepas — Singapore — Manila — Subic — Kaohsiung — Vung Tau — Tanjung Pelepas."

As of the third quarter of 2021, ICTSI's total revenues hit \$1.37 billion, a 24% increase from \$1.1 billion previously.

Its net income attributable to equity holders for the January-to-September period was \$316.4 million, 73% higher than the \$182.6 million earned in the same period in 2020.

The company handled consolidated volume of 8,266,621 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) during the period, 11% more than the 7,426,307 TEUs handled in the same period in 2020.

ICTSI shares closed 2.78% lower at P210 apiece on Thursday. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

## Century Properties lists P3-B five-year bonds

CENTURY Properties Group, Inc. (CPG) on Thursday listed the first P3-billion tranche of its P6-billion shelf-registered debt securities.

"As we value the trust given by our investors, we commit and we will be guided by our prudent financial management to help bring to fruition our expansion plans and make quality homes accessible to more Filipinos through our horizontal affordable housing business, a segment that has remained robust even as the pandemic loomed," CPG President and Chief Executive Officer Marco R. Antonio said during the listing ceremony.

"We are also cautiously optimistic on the prospects of our leasing business and our vertical residential projects," he added.

The company previously said that P1 billion of the proceeds from the bond offering will be used for the projects of its joint venture with Mitsubishi Corp., PHirst Park Homes, Inc.

PHirst Park Homes currently has 11 master-planned communities in Batangas, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Pampanga.

Proceeds from the offering will also be used to partially refinance debt as well as for other general corporate purposes.

The P3-billion five-year 5.7524% fixed-rate retail bonds due 2027 issuance comprised a P2-billion base offer with an oversubscription option of P1 billion, marking the company's fourth capital markets transaction of CPG.

"With the market fully taking up not only the P2-billion base offer but likewise, the full amount of the P1-billion oversubscription, we thank our investors for the trust and confidence and this confirms our outlook that brighter prospects are ahead of us, not only for CPG but also for the Philippine economy," Mr. Antonio said.

Philippine Dealing & Exchange Corp. (PDEX) President and CEO Antonino A. Nakpil said the CPG's P3-billion fixed-rate retail bonds were the fifth-straight oversubscribed issuance this year. The year-to-date total of the new listings at the PDEX amounts to P112.5 billion.

The total level of tradable corporate debt instruments stands at P1.38 trillion, which are issued by 53 firms via 193 securities.

Meanwhile, shares of Century Properties at the stock exchange declined 3.53% or 0.015 centavos to close at 41 centavos apiece on Thursday. — **Keren Concepcion G. Valmonte**

## SPNEC board agrees to acquire parent's stake in various assets

SOLAR Philippines Nueva Ecija Corp. (SPNEC) on Thursday said its board of directors had agreed to acquire the entire stake of Solar Philippines Power Project Holdings, Inc. (SPPHI) and its affiliates in 20 assets.

In a disclosure to the exchange, SPNEC said an asset-for-share swap deal will be done with its parent firm SPPHI with the latter subscribing to 24,373,050,000 shares of SPNEC at P2.50 apiece.

The 20 assets include, but not limited to: Solar Philippines Calatagan Corp.; Solar Philippines Tarlac Corp.; Solar Philippines Tanauan Corp.; Terra Solar Philippines, Inc.; SP Holdings, Inc.; Solar Philippines Batangas Baseload Corp.; Solar Philippines Tarlac Baseload Corp.; Solar Philippines Central Luzon Corp.; Solar Philippines South Luzon Corp.; Solar Philippines Southern Tagalog Corp.; Solar Philippines Eastern Corp.; Solar Philip-

pines Western Corp.; Solar Philippines Visayas Corp.; Solar Philippines Central Visayas Corp.; Solar Philippines Southern Mindanao Corp.; Solar Philippines Batangas Corp.; Solar Philippines Retail Electricity, Inc.; Laguna Solar Rooftop Corp.; Solar Philippines Rooftop Corp.; and Solar Philippines Commercial Rooftop Projects, Inc.

The Leviste-led company said the share swap "would be enabled by the increase in authorized capital stock for approval at SPNEC's stockholder's meeting set for March 7, and is subject to regulatory approvals."

In Jan. 11, the SPNEC board approved an increase in the company's authorized capital stock to 50 billion shares from 10 billion shares.

Company shares at the local bourse slipped by eight centavos or 4.17% to close at P1.84 apiece. — **Marielle C. Lucenio**