

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,989.88 ▲ 12.15 PTS. ▲ 0.17%

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2022

BusinessWorld

PSEI MEMBER STOCKS

<b>AC</b> Ayala Corp. P815.00 +P14.50 +1.81%	<b>ACEN</b> AC Energy Corp. P7.79 +P0.15 +1.96%	<b>AEV</b> Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P57.75 -P0.95 -1.62%	<b>AGI</b> Alliance Global Group, Inc. P12.80 +P0.10 +0.79%	<b>ALI</b> Ayala Land, Inc. P37.20 +P0.30 +0.81%	<b>AP</b> Aboitiz Power Corp. P34.50 +P1.00 +2.99%	<b>BDO</b> BDO Unibank, Inc. P125.40 +P1.40 +1.13%	<b>BPI</b> Bank of the Philippine Islands P93.25 +P2.25 +2.47%	<b>CNVRG</b> Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P24.00 -P0.95 -3.81%	<b>EMP</b> Emperador, Inc. P14.80 -P1.00 -6.33%
<b>GLO</b> Globe Telecom, Inc. P2,490.00 +P30.00 +1.22%	<b>GTCAP</b> GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P525.00 +P1.50 +0.29%	<b>ICT</b> International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P225.00 +P6.00 +2.74%	<b>JFC</b> Jollibee Foods Corp. P230.80 +P8.20 +3.68%	<b>JGS</b> JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P55.00 -P2.00 -3.51%	<b>LTG</b> LT Group, Inc. P9.12 -P0.08 -0.87%	<b>MBT</b> Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P53.75 +P1.25 +2.38%	<b>MEG</b> Megaworld Corp. P3.10 +P0.08 +2.65%	<b>MER</b> Manila Electric Co. P372.00 +P12.00 +3.33%	<b>MONDE</b> Monde Nissin Corp. P13.50 -P0.30 -2.17%
<b>MPI</b> Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P3.69 -P0.03 -0.81%	<b>PGOLD</b> Puregold Price Club, Inc. P33.60 -P0.20 -0.59%	<b>RLC</b> Robinsons Land Corp. P19.66 +P0.66 +3.47%	<b>SECB</b> Security Bank Corp. P107.00 +P0.10 +0.09%	<b>SM</b> SM Investments Corp. P871.00 -P19.00 -2.13%	<b>SMC</b> San Miguel Corp. P102.00 -P1.00 -0.97%	<b>SMPH</b> SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P37.00 -P0.40 -1.07%	<b>TEL</b> PLDT, Inc. P1,833.00 -P9.00 -0.49%	<b>URC</b> Universal Robina Corp. P111.50 +P1.20 +1.09%	<b>WLCON</b> Wilcon Depot, Inc. P26.85 +P0.55 +2.09%

# MPIC sets capex at P136B; power group gets P57B

By Arjay L. Balinbin  
Senior Reporter

PANGILINAN group's listed tollways and infrastructure conglomerate Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) has pegged its capital expenditures (capex) for this year at around P136 billion, up from last year's P78 billion.

"For the group-wide capex, it's about P136 billion — the biggest obviously will be coming from the power group, and that's about P57 billion," MPIC Chief Financial Officer and Chief Sustainability Officer June Cheryl A. Cabal-Revilla said during a virtual briefing on Wednesday.

Metro Pacific Tollways Corp.'s (MPTC) capex for the year is estimated to be P32 billion, while Maynilad Water Services, Inc.'s budget is about P12-14 billion, she added.

Meanwhile, Light Rail Manila Corp., operator of the Light Rail Transit Line 1, will have about P6 billion.

Including PLDT, Inc. and other non-MPIC companies, last year's capex "would be about P169 billion," MPIC Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan said.

For 2022, Ms. Cabal-Revilla said the group's capex — including PLDT group's P75 billion, Philex Mining Corp.'s P1.5 billion, and PXP Energy Corp.'s P2 billion — would be "about P215 billion."

As for the group's core income guidance for the year, she said:

"We will probably grow by a single-digit on the high side or by a double-digit but on the low side."

She said the group has yet to "rerun its numbers" to account for the impact of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine on its businesses.

The Russia-Ukraine conflict continues to push fuel prices upwards, Mr. Pangilinan noted.

He said rising fuel prices could affect the traffic volume on the group's tollways "because it's [now] more expensive to use cars."

"Philex Mining will be a beneficiary because metal prices have been as well impacted by overall geopolitical situations, principally in Ukraine," he added.

At the same time, he noted that the situation would have "very

little impact" on the group's water business.

"On telco, [the impact is] not much, because most of our revenues are driven by domestic demand," he also said.

MPTC expects to open in April the Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway and complete within the year the first phase of the North Luzon Expressway Connector project.

Ms. Cabal-Revilla said the group has "plans of doing an initial public offering" by "early next year."

"We do have other businesses that are for taking out to market, our hospital group and Maynilad. I think the most immediate that we can put out to market is the hospital group (Metro Pacific Hospitals)... because they are also trying to acquire more

hospitals to expand our footprint," she added.

MPIC's core net income for 2021 increased by 20% to P12.3 billion from P10.2 billion a year earlier.

"This substantial improvement from the 13% growth in the first half of the year was largely driven by improved traffic on the group's toll roads and higher volume of electricity sold by Manila Electric Co.," the listed company said in a statement.

Net Income attributable to owners of the parent company went up by 112% to P10.1 billion last year from P4.8 billion in 2020.

The group's core net income for the fourth quarter grew by 14% to P2.8 billion compared with the same period in 2020.

"This acceleration of growth reflected an improvement in per-

formance notwithstanding the continued imposition of varying levels of quarantine across the country to contain the coronavirus pandemic and was partially augmented by the impact of the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Law, which lowered corporate income tax rates from 30% to 25%," MPIC said.

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

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 0.81% lower at P3.69 apiece on Wednesday.

# Megaworld profit jumps 36% on strong sales, rentals

MEGAWORLD Corp. reported a 36% rise in net income attributable to equity holders to P13.4 billion due to strong real estate sales, office rentals, and hotel revenues, the real estate developer said in a disclosure on Wednesday.

"There has been a huge demand for titled lots, from both our residential and commercial offerings last year. We can see this trend to continue even this year," Megaworld Chief Strategy Officer Kevin L. Tan said.

After-tax net income grew by 36% to P14.4 billion in 2021 from P10.6 billion in 2020.

"In 2021, we shifted gears from pandemic management to restarting our growth trajectory, and our initiatives on this front have begun to bear fruit. As our numbers have shown, all our busi-

ness segments registered significant improvements, even as we continue to provide assistance to ensure the recovery of our various stakeholders," Mr. Tan added.

Revenues grew by 17% to P50.8 billion from P43.5 billion year on year. In the fourth quarter, revenues jumped by 37% to P13.9 billion from P10.1 billion.

Of Megaworld's core businesses, real estate sales increased by 25% to P31.1 billion in 2021 from P24.9 billion, as construction activities picked up during the year.

In 2021, the township developer launched 11 residential and commercial lot projects with a total sales value of P28 billion. This includes Maple Grove and Arden Botanical Estate in Cavite; Northwin Global City in Bulacan; Para-

gua Coasttown in Palawan; Eastland Heights in Rizal; McKinley West in Taguig City; and Alabang West in Las Piñas City.

Megaworld Premier Offices recorded rental income at P11.1 billion as it closed around 236,000 square meters (sq.m.) of new and renewal transactions, with an office occupancy rate at 90%.

Meanwhile, Megaworld Lifestyle Malls posted P2.3 billion in rental income last year, or 10% lower than the previous year due to pandemic lockdown restrictions.

Meanwhile, hotel operations reported revenues of P1.9 billion in 2021, up by 30% from P1.5 billion previously.

"This was due to the consistent performance of the company's in-city hotels and the opening of Kingsford

Hotel in the company's Westside City township within the Entertainment City during the second quarter of the year," the company said.

In 2021, Megaworld also launched its real estate investment trust (REIT) company, MREIT, Inc., which made its market debut on Oct. 1.

"The REIT structure provided a very good avenue for the company to unlock previously invested capital by infusing some of its office assets into MREIT. Since then, MREIT has grown its property portfolio GLA from the initial 224,000 sq.m. to 280,000 sq.m.," Megaworld said.

At the stock exchange on Wednesday, its shares rose by 2.65% or P0.08 to close at P3.10 apiece. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocsion**

# Sta. Lucia Land eyes loans, more land acquisitions

REAL estate developer Sta. Lucia Land, Inc. expects to further strengthen its presence in key areas of the country as it boosts its land-banking activities while looking at tapping loan and credit facilities worth P6 billion.

In a statement, the listed company said its expansion highlights its confidence in the Philippine real estate market.

"Over the last several years, Sta. Lucia Land has been aggressively expanding, announcing acquisitions in more areas including Cavite, Bulacan, Iloilo and Davao," it said.

In February, Sta. Lucia Land disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange that its board of directors had approved a number of resolutions such as authorizing the company to avail of loans and credit facilities from China Banking Corp.

The loan proceeds would be used to refinance maturing loans as well as fund project developments, land acquisitions and general corporate expenses, the company said.

The board also approved resolutions authorizing the company to acquire a total of 32.34 hectares of land in Laguna and Batangas, as well as enter into joint ventures for projects in Rizal, Batangas and Cotabato with a total area of 89.04 hectares.

"These planned acquisitions and joint venture projects do not only showcase the company's sustained expansion appetite despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, but are also seen to further cement the company's foothold in key areas across the country," Sta. Lucia Land said.

To date, Sta. Lucia Land and its parent firm have collectively built more than 250 projects, which covers at least 10,000 hectares across the country.

"Having been in the business of building homes for more than 50 years now, the Sta. Lucia Group continues to provide Filipinos with high quality, diversified offerings that include world-class golf courses and country clubs, resort-themed communities, townships, lake developments, condominiums and condotels, offices, and commercial spaces, among others," Sta. Lucia Land said in the statement.

On Wednesday, shares in Sta. Lucia Land rose by 2.57% or seven centavos to close at P2.79 each.

# MerryMart takes majority stake in Mindanao pharmacy

MERRYMART Consumer Corp. has finalized its acquisition of a majority stake in ZC Ramthel Corp. or Cecile's Pharmacy, which is said to be the biggest pharmacy chain in Zamboanga City in Mindanao.

In a stock exchange disclosure on Wednesday, MerryMart said it executed an agreement that finalized the acquisition of a 53.125% post-investment stake of the pharmacy.

According to the company, the Cecile's Pharmacy chain will still be managed by its current management team in cooperation with MerryMart personnel.

"There are only very few drug store chains in the Philippines that has been operational for decades and still remain to be the market leader and the top-of-mind brand in their respective market region. Cecile's Pharmacy chain is one of that select group that stood the test of time and we believe this acquisition will add great value to the MerryMart Group's ecosystem," MerryMart Chairman Edgar J. Sia II said.

MerryMart disclosed that it would acquire 25,000 secondary shares and 60,000 primary shares of Cecile's Pharmacy, equivalent to a 53.125% stake. The remaining 46.875% stake in the pharmacy

chain will be owned by the Saavedra family.

Meanwhile, Mr. Sia said the company is still targeting other merger and acquisition (M&A) opportunities in the grocery and pharmacy segments.

"While the MerryMart Group continues on with its organic expansion, MerryMart will continue to keep its eyes open for M&A opportunities in both the grocery and pharmacy space that would accelerate its growth to capitalize on the continued consolidation from traditional to modern retail in the Philippines," Mr. Sia said.

According to MerryMart, Cecile's Pharmacy has been operating since 1964. It currently has 21 operational branches and employs 300 personnel.

"In addition to enhancing MerryMart's trade volume in the pharmacy and prescription drug items, this transaction will bring significant improvement on cost efficiencies as MerryMart continues to strive to deliver better value to its customers and stakeholders," MerryMart Chief Financial Officer Hannah Yulo-Luccini said.

On Wednesday, MerryMart shares at the local bourse rose 6.01% or 11 centavos to end at P1.94 apiece.

— **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

# Robinsons Land nets P8.5B, up 62%

ROBINSONS Land Corp. (RLC) reported a 62% jump in its consolidated net income to P8.5 billion in an "eventful" 2021 that allowed it to corner opportunities as the economy started to reopen.

Consolidated revenues last year grew 30% to P36.54 billion.

"As the economy approaches full reopening, the diversity of our portfolio, our healthy balance sheet and agile mindset put us in a strong position to capture growth opportunities towards accelerated recovery," said RLC President and Chief Executive Officer Frederick D. Go in a press release on Wednesday.

He described 2021 "was an eventful year for RLC" during which it "pushed boundaries to create value for our stakeholders and continued to invest in our long-term sustainability."

Net income attributable to parent firm shareholders reached P8.06 billion last year, the company said without disclosing a comparative figure. But it said the amount translated to earnings per

share of P1.55, exceeding the P1.01 of the earlier year.

In the fourth quarter alone, net income more than doubled to P2.06 billion quarter on quarter due to eased lockdown restrictions. Total revenues for the quarter grew 15% to P5.66 billion in the earlier quarter.

Of RLC's businesses, Robinsons Malls recorded revenues of P8.25 billion in 2021, with earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) at P3.86 billion. In the fourth quarter, revenues grew 22% to P2.25 billion.

"RLC is optimistic that mall operating fundamentals will continue to rebound on the back of wide-spread vaccinations and pent-up demand," the company said.

In 2021, Robinsons Malls opened Robinsons Place La Union, its 53<sup>rd</sup> lifestyle center, expanded Robinsons Dumaguete, and reopened the second phase of Robinsons Place Tacloban. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocsion**

FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link <a href="https://bit.ly/35JlZAH">https://bit.ly/35JlZAH</a>

# ACEN income rises 22% to P5B on strong power demand

AC Energy Corp. (ACEN) reported a consolidated attributable net income of P5.25 billion in 2021, higher by 22% than the P4.29 billion recorded a year earlier, due to stronger power demand.

In its financial report filed to the exchange on Wednesday, the Ayala group's listed energy arm said revenues last year went up by 27% to P26.08 billion from

P20.49 billion in 2020, driven by stronger generation output.

"As the Philippines and the Asia-Pacific region recover from the pandemic's peak, the energy sector continues to experience strong demand for power. ACEN's robust 2021 financial and operating results reflect our ability to benefit from this," ACEN President and Chief Executive Officer Eric

T. Francia said in a separate statement to the exchange.

The renewable energy (RE) company said its attributable output grew 21% to 4,633 gigawatt-hours (GWh) from 3,818 GWh in 2020 on the back of the 23% climb in generation from RE sources. International output rose 24%, while generation from Philippine assets jumped 20%. — **Marielle C. Lucenio**

FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link <a href="https://bit.ly/379Gopi">https://bit.ly/379Gopi</a>