

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,606.94 ▲ 76.43 PTS. ▲ 1.17%

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BusinessWorld

PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P695.00 ---	ACEN ACEN Corp. P7.05 -P0.06 -0.84%	AEV Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P56.50 +P0.60 +1.07%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P9.74 +P0.14 +1.46%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P29.40 +P0.10 +0.34%	AP Aboitiz Power Corp. P34.50 ---	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P131.50 -P1.30 -0.98%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P102.10 +P3.10 +3.13%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P16.30 +P0.30 +1.88%	EMI Emperador, Inc. P19.82 +P0.06 +0.30%
GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P2,240.00 +P30.00 +1.36%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P458.00 +P27.60 +6.41%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P185.80 +P1.30 +0.70%	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P252.00 -P2.00 -0.79%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P44.00 +P0.50 +1.15%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P9.26 +P0.10 +1.09%	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P56.15 +P1.95 +3.60%	MEG Megaworld Corp. P2.26 -P0.01 -0.44%	MER Manila Electric Co. P284.60 -P5.20 -1.79%	MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P12.60 ---
MPI Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P3.58 +P0.05 +1.42%	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P34.80 -P0.05 -0.14%	RLC Robinsons Land Corp. P16.50 +P0.02 +0.12%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P30.65 -P0.70 -2.23%	SM SM Investments Corp. P910.00 +P16.00 +1.79%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P96.80 ---	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P35.95 +P0.95 +2.71%	TEL PLDT, Inc. P1,665.00 +P66.00 +4.13%	URC Universal Robina Corp. P133.00 +P0.20 +0.15%	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P32.50 +P0.55 +1.72%

MPTC to award Candaba viaduct project by yearend

By Arjay L. Balinbin
Senior Reporter

METRO Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC) said its unit NLEX Corp. expects to award the Candaba Third Viaduct project, valued at P6-7 billion, before the end of the year.

“The contract will be awarded soon, or before the end of the year,” MPTC Chief Financial Of-

ficer Christopher Daniel C. Lizo told *BusinessWorld* recently.

The Candaba Viaduct is a causeway allowing motorists to traverse the section of the swamp between Pulilan, Bulacan and Apalit, Pampanga. A third viaduct will be built between the northbound and southbound portions. The viaduct is a strategic expressway link that has been serving the Metro Manila, and Central and North Luzon road corridor for several years.

“Aside from making travels safer and more convenient, the project, once completed, will translate to faster journeys as it will increase the maximum speed on the viaduct from 60 kilometers per hour (kph) to 80 kph,” NLEX Corp. said in a statement.

According to Mr. Lizo, three contractors are vying for the contract.

In a separate interview, Joselito Manzo, business development manager at Acciona, said the Spanish infrastructure com-

pany is one of the bidders for the project.

“We have a local partner, so within this month they will issue the results, and we hope we can get that project,” he told *BusinessWorld*.

He said it will take two years to construct the five-kilometer viaduct.

“After building the middle viaduct, they plan to demolish the southbound portion and replace it with a new one. Maybe, if we can

get the first one, we can continue the other one,” Mr. Manzo added.

Acciona was also involved in the construction of the Cebu-Cordova Link Expressway.

The southbound portion of the Candaba Viaduct, a vital link between Pampanga and Bulacan, has been undergoing safety repairs.

The initiative is part of a four-year rehabilitation plan to improve the bridge’s efficiency and safety.

According to NLEX Corp., it completed last year the link

slab upgrade of the southbound portion.

MPTC is the tollway 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.

Global-Estate plans P1.3-billion luxury village in Cavite

ANDREW L. TAN’s Global-Estate Resorts, Inc. will be building a luxury residential village in Trece Martires, Cavite from which it expects P1.3 billion in sales for the first phase.

The 41.8-hectare Prana Garden Villas will offer a total of 178 lots ranging from 240 square meters (sq.m.) to 513 sq.m., the company said in a press release. The village will sit inside the 340-hectare lifestyle community, Sherwood Hills, which is known for its nature-contoured golf course.

Prana Garden Villas’ Grand Clubhouse will have a multi-level pool, wading pool, differently-abled pool, cabanas, meditation area, yoga and exercise deck, dry river walk, sunken outdoor seating area, courtyard, and covered walkways.

The village will also house a fitness center, visitor’s lounge, collaboration space, daycare, a function area, several water features, and sand gardens.

Green and open spaces will comprise 40% of the entire Prana Garden

Villas. It will be surrounded by different schools, hospitals, institutional establishments, leisure resorts, and a commercial area.

The main road inside Prana Garden Villas will be around 19.2 meters wide, while its secondary roads will be about 13 meters wide.

“Through this development, we intend to create a sanctuary of wellness that allows future residents to nurture unique, holistic lifestyles while living harmoniously with nature,” said Rach-

elle I. Peñaflorida, first vice-president for sales and marketing of Megaworld Global-Estate, Inc.

For its first phase, lots in Prana Garden Villas will start to be turned over in 2026.

The village is said to be five minutes away from Governor’s Drive, less than two hours away from the central business districts of Makati and Fort Bonifacio, and an hour away from the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

DMCI Homes, SMPC seen to do well in 2023

SEMIRARA Mining and Power Corp. (SMPC) is expected in 2023 to match this year’s performance while DMCI Homes, Inc. is seen to surpass its 2022 showing, top officials of the Consunji-led companies said.

“I think Semirara would do okay for 2023,” Isidro A. Consunji, chief executive officer of SMPC and chairman of DMCI Homes, told reporters last week. “I think it will be the same [but with a] different mix. I think power will contribute more because of the supply and demand issue.”

According to Mr. Consunji, if coal prices drop next year, it will be compensated by the company’s power business. SMPC is a listed company that has integrated its business as a coal supplier or producer into its power generation segment.

Meanwhile, DMCI Homes President Alfredo R. Austria said that he expects the company to record higher sales and reservations next year.

“For homes, [it will be] higher than this year. [For] this year, we targeted P27 billion, for next year, P35 billion,” Mr. Austria said.

DMCI Homes already reached its 2022 target and is about to close the year with P32 billion in sales and reservations.

“Our selling price is way below market,” Mr. Consunji said, adding that DMCI Homes’ value-for-money positioning “is still very strong.”

DMCI Homes is planning to build a high-rise residential project in Pasay City. The project will house 900 units and will be one of the lowest-tier housing projects of the company.

Units in the project will be sold at around P2.4 million to P2.5 million, each with around 18 square meters of floor area. The project is targeting the low to lower-middle-class market, which is a new market for DMCI Homes.

Mr. Austria said that due to the slowing down of the economy, the middle market became limited, prompting the company to look for other markets.

He added that DMCI Homes already secured the land and the schematics for the project, and is just waiting for the permits.

According to Mr. Consunji, DMCI Homes has products that cater to those with high-paying jobs. With its Pasay project, the company is targeting those with lower-paying jobs such as small entrepreneurs.

The project is said to provide amenities that are present in the company’s other projects but smaller in size. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

OUTLIER

Earnings data, digitalization news lift Security Bank stock

SHARES in Security Bank Corp. moved upward as market players assessed its latest earnings report as well as its partnership with Consolsys, the Malaysia-based automation company that will handle the listed bank’s move to go digital.

Data from the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) show Security Bank ranking 17th in value turnover with P556.09 million worth of 5.86 million shares changing hands from Nov. 21 to 25.

The bank’s shares closed at P96 apiece on Friday, up by 4.4% from its Nov. 18 close. For the year, the stock has decreased by 19.3%.

Joylin F. Telagen, research head at IB Gimenez Research Securities, said the stock’s movement was a continuation of its upward trajectory after the bank reported better-than-expected third-quarter and nine-month earnings.

“Coupled by Fed minutes that they might start to slow down the future increases, with possible 50 basis points increase in federal funds rate next month, Dec 13-14,” Ms. Telagen said in an e-mail.

Mercantile Securities Corp. Head Trader Jeff Radley C. See said in a separate e-mail that overall market sentiment pushed the listed bank’s share price higher.

“Last PSE Index rebalancing, SECB was taken out thus dropping to as long as P80,” Mr. See added, referring to Security Bank’s ticker symbol. “SECB is undervalued among the other actively traded banks.”

In July, the PSE announced changes in the composition of the local stock barometer, the PSE index or PSEi. Consunj-led Semirara Mining and Power Corp. replaced the bank in the main index starting on Aug. 8.

Meanwhile, Reuters

reported that a “substantial majority” of policy makers at the US Federal Reserve agreed that it would “likely soon be appropriate” to slow the pace of interest rate hikes as debate broadened over the implications of the US central bank’s rapid tightening of monetary policy.

The meeting showed officials were satisfied that they could move rates in smaller, more deliberate steps as the economy adjusted to more expensive credit and concerns about “overshooting” seemed to increase.

Back home, reports last week said Security Bank tapped Consolsys to shift its branch banking management system to a state-of-the-art digital, cloud-based, omnichannel platform.

Under the partnership, the listed bank’s current tellering, lobby management, and signature verification system (SVS) are to be replaced with Mosaic Voyager.

Mosaic Voyager is a cloud-based omnichannel delivery system that reduces inefficiencies, increases overall productivity, and provides an avenue for increased touchpoints.

According to Security Bank, once the system has been fully implemented, the comprehensive and transformative system would enhance its capability to provide a truly differentiated experience for transacting customers, boost operational efficiency, and propel the bank forward in its digital banking transformation.

Ms. Telagen said that fundamentally, the news was taken positively by long-term investors because of its impact on future revenue streams.

However, she cautioned that the risk of stagflation still lingers.

For Mr. See, market players took the news positively. — **Abigail Marie P. Yraola**

FULL STORY



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PLDT increasing budget to keep data center in Laguna on track

THE PLDT group expects to exceed its budget of P85 billion for the year to keep its projects, including the hyperscale data center in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, on track.

“We’ll be higher than P85 billion,” PLDT, Inc. Chief Executive Officer and President Alfredo S. Panlilio told reporters last week. “There are some projects that we are fast-tracking, the hyperscale data center for example, because some of the equipment that normally take a shorter lead time now take longer because of supply chain issues, so you might have to pull that forward,” he noted.

“There are projects like these that we’re looking at to make sure that we don’t get delayed in the future,” he added.

The company has said that it will be spending up to P13 billion for its 11th and largest VITRO hyperscale data center facility.

The project, which is expected to be completed by 2024, is being carried out by the group’s information and communications technology arm ePLDT.

The project will be the “first of a series of hyperscale data centers totaling to a power requirement of 100 megawatts over the medium term,” PLDT said.

According to Mr. Panlilio, the group’s data centers are being expanded to accommodate the growing demand and ensure that “we are able to keep up and deliver future requirements.”

On Friday last week, the group announced that it had successfully completed the land-

ing of the shore-end segment of the Asia Direct Cable system (ADC) project at its western cable landing station in Nasugbu, Batangas.

The project, once completed, is expected to boost the group’s international capacity by up to 36 terabits per second (Tbps), bringing it to nearly 100 Tbps by end-2023.

“Commencing in the Philippines, the second stage of the marine installation will continue to further link six other international cable landing points in Asia including Tuas, Singapore; Chung Hom Kok, Hong Kong; Quy Nhon, Vietnam; Sri Racha, Thailand; and Shantou, China. The marine installation of the trunk segment to Maruyama, Japan was completed during the first stage of the marine works,” PLDT said in a statement.

ADC is a global consortium comprised of PLDT, China Telecom, China Unicom, National Telecom, Singtel, SoftBank Corp., Tata Communications, and the Viettel Group.

“Once ADC is completed and put in service by end-2023, PLDT’s Batangas cable landing station will host a total of three international subsea cable systems. It currently hosts SEA-ME-WE3 cable that goes to South Asia, the Middle East and Western Europe, as well as the regional Asia Pacific Cable Network Number 2,” the group said.

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**

CTA partially grants Lazada’s tax refund claim

THE Court of Tax Appeals (CTA) has reduced the local business tax (LBT) liabilities of Lazada E-Services Philippines, Inc. to P8.17 million from P21.84 million for the years 2015 and 2017.

In a decision dated Nov. 23 and made public on Nov. 25, the CTA Special Third Division said the city treasurer of Makati City had the power to impose LBT on Lazada for those years.

The court ruled that the e-commerce platform was liable to pay the local government unit (LGU) P3.42 million for the taxable year 2015 and P4.75 million for 2017.

“Accordingly, petitioner Lazada E-Services Philippines, Inc. is ordered to pay the respondents City of Makati and City Treasurer of Makati City the reduced amount of P8,167,694.76,” CTA Associate Justice Erlinda P. Uy said in the ruling.

The tribunal also set aside the P13.67 million LBT for 2016 due to a lack of evidence.

Lazada transferred its main office to Taguig City in 2016 but retained its Makati office until it stopped doing business in Makati on Sept. 30, 2017.

The court said the firm failed to prove that the operations in the Makati office were not taxable or limited to non-revenue generating activities upon the retirement of its businessmen in Makati City.

“It is evident from the foregoing gross sales/receipts for 2017 that despite the transfer of the petitioner’s principal office to Taguig City, sales activities were still being conducted, generated, and recorded in the petitioner’s Makati office,” it noted. — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**

FULL STORY



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