

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

7,041.50 ▼ 28.18 PTS. ▼ 0.39%

TUESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2023
BusinessWorld

PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P745.00 —	ACEN ACEN Corp. P7.35 +P0.13 +1.80%	AEV Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P57.85 -P0.85 -1.45%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P12.42 -P0.08 -0.64%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P32.85 +P0.05 +0.15%	AP Aboitiz Power Corp. P37.95 +P0.15 +0.40%	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P122.40 -P0.10 -0.08%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P108.30 -P1.70 -1.55%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P19.00 -P0.38 -1.96%	EMI Emperador, Inc. P20.35 -P0.25 -1.21%
GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P2,120.00 +P78.00 +3.82%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P505.50 -P0.50 -0.10%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P212.00 -P4.00 -1.85%	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P246.00 +P3.40 +1.40%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P55.20 -P2.20 -3.83%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P10.06 +P0.06 +0.60%	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P58.90 +P0.20 +0.34%	MEG Megaworld Corp. P2.23 +P0.10 +4.69%	MER Manila Electric Co. P290.00 +P2.80 +0.97%	MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P13.96 -P0.52 -3.59%
MPI Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P4.35 +P0.28 +6.88%	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P35.70 -P0.50 -1.38%	RLC Robinsons Land Corp. P15.82 +P0.82 +5.47%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P33.50 -P1.25 -3.60%	SM SM Investments Corp. P945.00 -P5.00 -0.53%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P95.15 -P1.90 -1.96%	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P37.50 -P0.50 -1.32%	TEL PLDT, Inc. P1,504.00 +P26.00 +1.76%	URC Universal Robina Corp. P144.00 +P4.00 +2.86%	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P33.55 -P0.55 -1.61%

Converge hits fiber port target, steps up coverage

LISTED fiber internet provider Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. announced on Tuesday that it had achieved its two-million fiber port rollout target for 2022.

“As of Dec. 31, 2022, Converge has already deployed more than two million fiber ports in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao, further cementing its position as the largest fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) network in the Philippines,” the company said in an e-mailed statement.

Converge said it is on track to reach its accelerated target to cover approximately 55% of homes nationwide this year, with its household coverage at 53% as of Sept. 30, 2022.

The company has allocated P21 billion to P23 billion in total capital expenditures for this year.

“Converge continues to expand its nationwide network reach to efficiently deliver consumer network demands and empower Filipinos across urban and rural areas,” Converge Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer Dennis Anthony H. Uy said.

“With this record deployment of ports, we are ensuring high availability in more areas around the country,” he added.

The company noted that it bolstered its port deployment in the National Capital Region, including Rizal, North and Central Luzon, as well as Mindanao.

“Converge also maintained its aggressive rollout in the Visayas as it continued

to seek growth opportunities in the region,” it added.

The company also said that it has extended its fiber footprint to more than 613,000 kilometers, consisting of subsea, aerial, and terrestrial fiber optic cable network, all over the country.

For the nine months that ended Sept. 30, 2022, Converge saw its net income grow 17% to P6.11 billion from P5.2 billion in 2021.

Revenues for the period went up 30% to P24.48 billion from P18.83 billion

previously, while the cost of services increased 29% to P9.65 billion from P7.46 billion in the same period last year.

The company achieved earnings before interests, taxes, depreciation, and amortization or EBITDA of P14.4 billion for the period, 39% higher than the previous year.

“As a result, the company’s consolidated EBITDA margin reached an all-time high of 59.0% during the nine-month period,” Converge said in a statement. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

NAIA privatization covers operations, not assets — Transport chief

THE Transportation department on Tuesday clarified that the Marcos administration will only privatize the maintenance and operations and not the assets of Metro Manila’s international airport.

Transportation Secretary Jaime J. Bautista made the clarification after President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. denied on Monday night that there were plans to privatize the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA).

In a Palace briefing on Tuesday, Mr. Bautista said the private sector will manage the operations through a concession agreement with the government.

“What the President meant was that the assets of NAIA would not be given to the private sector,” he said. “What he meant was that it’s the private sector that will manage the operations through

a concession agreement, which is what we have been doing at two airports now — Cebu and Clark.”

The Mactan-Cebu International Airport and Clark International Airport are operated by private firms GMR Megawide Cebu Airport Corp. and Luzon International Premier Airport Development Corp., respectively.

On Monday night, Mr. Marcos said he and other government officials had a meeting with the company during their trip to New York last year. He said the firm runs several big airports abroad.

When asked to confirm the President’s statement, Mr. Bautista said: “We are preparing the terms of reference, and this will be subject to bidding by proponents.”

He said the department is looking at two scenarios.

“One is for us to receive what you call an unsolicited proposal *na puwedeng kasama iyong kausap namin sa* (that may include the one we talked to in) New York, or we will invite them to submit a proposal based on the approved terms of reference that we are now preparing,” Mr. Bautista said. “That’s the possibility on the NAIA operations.”

Mr. Bautista said the privatization of NAIA would not automatically lead to an increase in terminal fees. “The government will have a say in the rates that the operators will impose.”

Earlier, he said his agency had been working with the Asian Development Bank on the preparation of the terms of reference for the privatization of NAIA’s operations.

Meanwhile, Mr. Bautista said Mr. Marcos had instructed his agency to

fast-track the government’s deal with Sumitomo Corp. and Thales Corp. for the management of the country’s air traffic system.

This was after the country experienced an air traffic management glitch on New Year’s Day.

“The President is very much aware of what happened and he supports our recommendation to implement future requirements necessary for the upgrade or improvement of the CNS/ATM (Communications, Navigation and Surveillance Systems for Air Traffic Management) system, which includes hardware and software maintenance, hardware replacement, ultimate fallback system for software redundancy and the need for an independent CNS/ATM in a separate location.” — **Kyle Aristophere Atienza**

Premiere Horizon says court finds probable estafa case vs 2 persons

PREMIERE Horizon Alliance Corp. disclosed on Tuesday that the Pasig City prosecutor’s office found two individuals with ties to the company indictable for estafa under Article 315 of the Revised Penal Code.

In a regulatory filing, the firm said that the Office of the City Prosecutor of Pasig City issued a resolution dated Dec. 28, 2022 “finding probable cause to indict and bind for trial Augusto Antonio C. Serafica, Jr. and Marvin C. Dela Cruz for the crime of estafa.”

On Dec. 6, 2022, Premiere Horizon filed a criminal complaint for estafa against the two for “alleged misappropriation” of P32 million in corporate funds. The amount is part of the funding for Premiere Horizon’s Bonifacio Global City project.

Mr. Serafica was a member of the company’s board of directors, while Mr. Dela Cruz is a shareholder.

On Jan. 16, Premiere Horizon said that Mr. Serafica and Elizabeth C. Timbol, an independent director, tendered their resignation effective on the same date for personal reasons.

Four days earlier, on Jan. 12, George Edwin Y. Sycip, a regular director of the company, also tendered his resignation for personal reasons.

On Jan. 9, Premiere Horizon announced that Felipe A. Judan, its independent director, resigned from his position effective Dec. 31, 2022.

In the company’s latest public ownership report, Mr. Dela Cruz was reported to hold around 1.39 billion shares in Premiere Horizon, which is 24.35% of the company’s total outstanding shares.

Meanwhile, Mr. Serafica holds a total of 261.57 million shares representing 4.58% of the company’s total outstanding shares.

On Dec. 28, 2022, the corporation announced that it received physical copies of the summons from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) ordering Premiere Horizon to file a verified answer to a petition filed by Mr. Dela Cruz.

The petition sought the SEC’s issuance of an order directing and authorizing Mr. Dela Cruz to call for a special stockholders’ meeting. It also sought a sanction for the “continued refusal [of Premiere Horizon, its board of directors and officers] to hold a special stockholders’ meeting.”

At the stock exchange on Tuesday, Premiere Horizon shares fell by 7.32% to close at P0.38 each. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Maynilad says water treatment plant in Muntinlupa 53% done

MAYNILAD Water Services, Inc. said on Tuesday that it is now more than halfway through the construction of its Poblacion water treatment plant in Muntinlupa.

“Once fully operational by the first half of 2024, this facility will have the capacity to produce 150 MLD (million liters per day) of potable water for the southern portion of Maynilad’s concession area, particularly Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, and Cavite,” the west zone water concessionaire said.

The Poblacion water treatment plant, now 53% complete, is expected to produce 50 MLD of additional water supply by yearend. It will be Maynilad’s third facility to tap Laguna Lake as an alternative raw source of water.

Currently, Maynilad has two treatment plants in Putatan, which provide 300 MLD to around 1.7 million customers.

“Our production of 300 MLD is stretched to meet the current requirements of our customers in the south. Hence, whenever extreme conditions necessitate reduced production, there is no extra supply so some of our customers experience service disruption. The additional output that we will get from the Poblacion WTP will help

to address that,” said Maynilad Chief Operating Officer Randolph T. Estrellado.

The Poblacion water treatment plant is part of Maynilad’s P220 billion service enhancement program for 2023 to 2027.

Separately on Tuesday, Lee Robert M. Britanico, deputy administrator for customer service regulation of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), said that the agency’s corporate office continues to look for a new water source.

“If we fail to look for an additional source the existing water supply can no longer meet the demand and the increasing population,” he said in a virtual press briefing.

He also said that the MWSS is now coordinating with Maynilad and Manila Water Co., Inc. to ensure adequate and uninterrupted water supply for the summer months.

“We have a supply deficit now not just in southern Metro Manila,” Mr. Britanico said, referring to the Philippine capital and parts of Cavite and Rizal provinces. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

Assisted SIM registration in remote areas begins this week

THE Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) announced on Tuesday that the assisted registration of subscriber identity module (SIM) cards in the identified remote areas will start this week.

“SIM registration rollout in remote areas will commence this week for 15 identified locations in different provinces,” the DICT said in a statement.

According to DICT Spokesperson and Undersecretary Anna Mae Y. Lamentillo, the government-led facilitation of SIM registration in remote areas aims to ensure that the implementation of the SIM registration law is “inclusive and that we finish the SIM registration on time.”

“We are reaching out to SIM end-users in areas with limited telecommunication or internet access to assist them in registering their SIMs. The DICT’s Free Wi-Fi sites will serve as the hubs for SIM registration in geographically isolated and disadvantaged areas (GIDAs),” she added.

The department said that the Department of the Interior and Local

Government (DILG) has tasked concerned local government units (LGUs) to ensure the success of the assisted registration in the identified areas.

“The DILG is providing its full assistance in the rollout of SIM registration in remote areas through our LGUs. Secretary Benhur C. Abalos, Jr. has already urged LGUs to exert all efforts to promote responsible use of SIM cards, educate their stakeholders on the benefits of SIM registration, and guide and assist our citizens in the whole registration process,” said DILG Spokesperson Margarita N. Gutierrez.

Among the identified areas for the assisted SIM registration are Pasuquin, Ilocos Norte; Moalboal, Cebu; Palo, Leyte; Pangantucan, Bukidnon; Malalag, Bulacan; Rosario, Batangas; City of Zamboanga, Zamboanga del Sur; Baco, Oriental Mindoro; City of Ligao, Albay; Carles, Iloilo; Arakan, Cotabato; and Tagbina, Surigao del Sur. — **Arjay L. Balinbin**

FULL STORY



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Tax court affirms Robinsons Land’s canceled tax worth P3.76 million

THE Court of Tax Appeals (CTA) has affirmed its ruling that set aside Robinsons Land Corp.’s (RLC) tax liabilities worth P3.76 million including penalties and interests for the fiscal year 2009.

In a 38-page decision on Jan. 17 and made public on Jan. 20, the CTA full court denied the commissioner of internal revenue’s (CIR) appeal to overturn the ruling since it was filed late.

The country’s revenue code mandates that a motion for reconsideration must be filed within 15 days to dispute a court ruling.

“All told, the decision dated July 9, 2020 of the court’s first division had already attained finality because of the petitioner’s (CIR) belated filing of his motion for reconsideration,” according to the ruling penned by Associate Justice Lane S. Cui-David.

“Under the doctrine of immutability of judgment, the said decision may no longer be modified even if it is meant to correct an erroneous conclusion of law and facts of the court in division,” the magistrate added.

Under the tax court’s rules, litigants must prove their compliance with the 15-

day period mandated under the tax code before the tribunal can hear the appeal.

The CTA First Division had voided the CIR’s final letter of demand and final assessment notice because they did not show definite due dates for payment, which violated RLC’s right to due process.

Citing a Supreme Court ruling, it said that tax demand letters that fail to provide a specific due date of payment must be nullified.

The tribunal said the CIR did not comply with the tax code’s due process requirement when the official did not

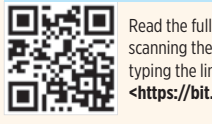
explain why RLC’s arguments to dispute the assessment were rejected.

Tax assessments that fail to afford a taxpayer due process must be voided, according to the country’s tax code.

“The right to be heard, which includes the right to present evidence, is meaningless if the Commissioner can simply ignore the evidence without reason,” it said.

“A party’s fundamental right to due process includes the right to be informed of the various issues involved in a proceeding and the reasons for the decision rendered by the quasi-judicial agency.” — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**

FULL STORY



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