

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,603.15

▲ 8.12 PTS.

▲ 0.12%

TUESDAY, MARCH 28, 2023

BusinessWorld

PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P665.50 +P0.50 +0.08%	ACEN ACEN Corp. P6.50 +P0.03 +0.46%	AEV Aboltiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P50.00 -P1.00 -1.96%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P12.66 -P0.04 -0.31%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P28.45 -P0.05 -0.18%	AP Aboltiz Power Corp. P37.10 +P0.45 +1.23%	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P125.50 -P1.00 -0.79%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P101.80 -P0.20 -0.2%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P13.40 +P0.04 +0.3%	DMC DMCI Holdings, Inc. P11.54 +P0.50 +4.53%
EMI Emperador, Inc. P20.50 +P0.05 +0.24%	GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,850.00 +P29.00 +1.59%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P499.00 -P5.00 -0.99%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P214.20 +P4.20 +2%	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P223.60 -P2.40 -1.06%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P50.80 -P0.20 -0.39%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P9.91 -P0.13 -1.29%	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P57.00 -P0.90 -1.55%	MER Manila Electric Co. P306.40 +P8.40 +2.82%	MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P11.28 -P0.04 -0.35%
MPI Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P3.82 +P0.15 +4.09%	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P33.00 +P0.30 +0.92%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P32.85 +P1.90 +6.14%	SM SM Investments Corp. P915.50 -P2.50 -0.27%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P105.00 -P0.60 -0.57%	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P33.85 -P0.10 -0.29%	TEL PLDT Inc. P1,368.00 +P37.00 +2.78%	UBP Union Bank of the Philippines P85.00 -P0.50 -0.58%	URC Universal Robina Corp. P147.00 +P0.40 +0.27%	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P28.00 +P0.25 +0.9%

Puregold net income up 13.5% to P9B as sales rise

LISTED retailer Puregold Price Club, Inc. recorded a 13.5% increase in consolidated net income to P9.23 billion in 2022 from P8.18 billion in the previous year due to higher sales.

“[Puregold] has sustained a growth path throughout the pandemic by being a reliable partner to its suppliers and leveraging its

reach and scale to bring value to its community of carded members,” the company said in a disclosure on Tuesday.

The company’s revenues increased by 16.1% due to an 11.7% growth in same-store sales. It did not give out specific figures.

“The company still sees continuous growth in its topline in the com-

ing years due to country’s healthy underlying fundamentals, underserved demand and relatively raw retail landscape,” the company said.

Puregold said that consolidated net sales grew by 12.3% to P184.30 billion from the P164.13 billion it saw the previous year, driven by same-store sales growth and new-store growth.

Operating expenses rose by 10.7% to P22.52 billion from P20.35 billion previously.

“The increase in operating expenses was primarily attributable to higher employee costs, utilities expense and lease-related charges partially offset by execution of productivity initiatives,” Puregold said.

Cost of sales also increased by 12.3% to P150.48 billion from the P134.04 billion reported in the previous year.

Gross profits, likewise, grew in 2022 by 12.4% to P33.82 billion from P30.08 billion last year.

Year to date, the company added 24 new Puregold stores, bringing the group’s total network to 525 stores.

In ended 2022 with 452 Puregold stores, 22 S&R membership shopping warehouses, and 48 S&R New York Style quick service restaurants.

On the stock market on Tuesday, shares in Puregold rose by 0.9% or 30 centavos to close at P33 apiece. — **Adrian H. Halili**

US firm Envirotech allots \$80M for EV assembly in Clark

US-BASED Envirotech Vehicles, Inc. (EVT) is investing \$80 million in a manufacturing plant in the Clark Freeport Zone that will allow the local assembly of electric vehicles as it moves to expand its market presence.

“It is an ongoing cost, so the more we manufacture, the more we do. But the initial investment that we have scheduled right now to build a plant is an \$80 million investment over the course of about four years,” EVT President and Chief Executive Officer Phillip Oldridge told reporters on the sidelines of a press conference in Taguig City on Tuesday.

Mr. Oldridge said the electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer is planning to build its facility on 15,000 to 20,000 square meters of land in Clark. It targets to begin construction by October this year.

“We’re hoping to have that entire facility completely finished and up and functioning by December 2025,” he said.

While waiting for the plant’s completion, Mr. Oldridge said that EVT signed a two-year lease agreement with Ber-

thaphil, Inc., a real estate developer in Clark, for the temporary location of its facility. The agreement could be prolonged into five years.

“Right now, we’re going to start the temporary locations and we’re going to use those locations and convert those into parks and parks storage afterwards. And then we’re going to build out a manufacturing facility,” he said.

“Our company is now incorporated, it’s all registered. We are ready to go,” he added.

According to Mr. Oldridge, the planned manufacturing facility will generate around 800 direct jobs spread over three areas: manufacturing, green energy, and technology.

“Indirectly, you’ll probably create another 250 to 400 jobs as we outsource things like tires, brakes, wheels, and wiring harnesses,” he added.

“You’ll have a capacity of about 2,100 vehicles a year. We manufacture classes three, four, five, and six trucks. We also manufacture Class A, B, and C school buses. So up to 84 passengers and school

buses and all of those vehicles are electric,” Mr. Oldridge said.

Senate President Juan Miguel F. Zubiri said in the same event that EVT’s plan for local assembly helps the country’s move to modernize public utility vehicles (PUVs).

“With EVT’s operations here, we can really take advantage of the local production of EVs and EV parts for our modernization efforts. This will be a cheaper, quicker, and overall more sustainable way of implementing our PUV modernization,” Mr. Zubiri said.

“On top of EVT being instrumental in greening our transport sector, its EVs will also be a welcome reprieve to rising fuel costs,” he added.

Meanwhile, Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno said the entry of EVT boosts the country’s push for EVs.

“Today’s signing of the lease agreement of EVT marks an important first step in our efforts to develop the EV industry in the Philippines and advance the country’s goal of becoming the regional hub for manufacturing,” Mr. Diokno said.

“There is no better time to set up shop in the Philippines than now,” he said, adding that the government is ready to facilitate EVT’s establishment of a manufacturing plant in Clark.

Trade Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual said that EVT could benefit from the country’s big market, while also tapping the markets of neighboring countries.

“The important thing that you should keep in mind while you’re putting up the manufacturing facilities in Clark, and you have a big market to serve in the Philippines, is that there is a much bigger market around us,” Mr. Pascual said.

He said as part of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the Philippines’ market is the bloc’s 10 members “because we enjoy free trade agreements with all these countries.”

“We have of course a bigger grouping, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which adds five more countries in the regional bloc. So that’s your whole market for EVs,” he added. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**



JORDANE MATHIEU/UNSPASH

Liberty Flour Mills sells building to real estate unit

LISTED flour manufacturer Liberty Flour Mills, Inc. on Tuesday said that it had sold its real estate asset to its property subsidiary LFM Properties Corp. (LPC).

The company said in a stock exchange disclosure that its board had approved the sale of Liberty Building at a price equivalent to 28%, more or less, of the asset value of the corporation.

Liberty Flour Mills is the registered owner of the property, which is located at 835 A. Arnaiz Ave., Makati City.

“If a favorable opinion is secured, the Corporation and LPC intend to execute a deed of absolute sale on or before April 30, 2023,” the company said.

The sale will be based on the fairness opinion issued by an independent third-party adviser within the next weeks.

In November last year, the company entered into a memorandum of understanding with LPC for the sale of the said building and the 1,009-square-meter lot where it stands.

Liberty Flour Mills is a holding firm with business interests in manufacturing flour and flour-related products. It has two subsidiaries: LPC, which is a real estate company, and Liberty Engineering Corp., which sells equipment and machinery.

On the stock market on Tuesday, shares of LFM Properties increased P0.003 or 3.16% to close at P0.098 apiece. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

Toyota projects stronger performance for 2023

TOYOTA MOTOR Philippines Corp. (TMP) is expecting a stronger performance for 2023 after posting the highest sales among local car manufacturers last year.

“2023 promises to be an even more amazing year,” TMP President Atsuhiko Okamoto said in a statement on Tuesday.

“I am confident that with the strongest product lineup in the country, the strongest dealers and, most importantly, the strongest team members and Toyota professionals ever, we will strive to be the best friend of every Filipino. Their trust is the strongest foundation for our future,” he added.

Mr. Okamoto said this as TMP recently held its annual dealer conference for its dealership network in the country. He said the company topped passenger car sales, commercial vehicle sales, and overall sales.

Last year, TMP led all car brands in terms of sales as it sold 174,106 units, or 49.38% out of the 352,596 units sold, based on figures from the Chamber of Automotive Manufacturers of the Philippines, Inc. (CAMPI) and Truck Manufacturers Association (TMA).

CAMPI and TMA data also showed that TMP had the highest sales among vehicle

brands as of end-February 2023, with 28,299 units sold or 46.85% of the overall 60,404 units sold.

Meanwhile, the TMP gave out several awards for dealerships such as the President’s Award of Excellence large business division for Toyota Pasig; medium business division for Toyota Marilao, Bulacan, Inc.; and small business division for Toyota Tarlac City.

TMP also conferred the President’s Customer Satisfaction Cup of Excellence for Toyota Batangas City, Inc., Toyota Nueva Ecija, Inc., and Toyota Mandaue North, Cebu, as well as the President’s Value Chain Award of Excellence for Toyota Balintawak, Inc.

“When it mattered the most, we came together as one team with one aim: to stand strong with each other so we could, most importantly, stand strong for our customers. As result, we were awarded with their trust and by their smiles,” TMP Chairman Alfred V. Ty said.

“As we celebrate our 35th year in the Philippines armed with the time-honored values of our shareholders, Toyota is more dedicated to doing what we do best — to continue producing happiness,” he added. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Meralco forms new unit, aims to be ‘major player’ in EV industry

MANILA Electric Co. (Meralco) announced on Tuesday the creation of its new subsidiary Movem Electric, Inc.

In a stock exchange disclosure, Meralco said it has received the documents from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) incorporating its subsidiary, which will focus on transport service networks utilizing electric energy and other alternative energy sources.

“The incorporation of Movem Electric, Inc. is in line with Meralco’s plans to be a major player in the growing electric vehicle industry,” Meralco said in a statement issued via Viber.

The power utility giant said its new subsidiary will also focus on the development and deployment of different electric transport solutions.

Meralco said in its regulatory filing that Movem Electric will also own, create, develop, manufacture, produce, operate, install, license

and sell service networks utilizing electric energy and other alternative energy sources, and their component charging stations both for local and foreign markets.

Meanwhile, Meralco clarified that its other subsidiary eSakay, Inc., will focus on public transportation service.

“Meralco is committed to enable and support the country’s transition towards a cleaner and a more sustainable transport system,” it said.

At the local bourse on Tuesday, shares in the company gained P8.40 or 2.82% to close at P306.40 apiece.

Meralco’s controlling stakeholder, Beacon Electric Asset Holdings, Inc., is partly owned by PLDT Inc. Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has an interest in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

IKEA recalls toy product due to potential choking hazard

SWEDISH furniture manufacturer IKEA has issued a product recall for one of its toy products sold in the Philippines following a potential choking hazard among children.

IKEA said in an advisory dated March 24 that it is recalling the Blavingad fishing game multicolor product due to the threat of choking on the toy’s small rivets.

The company said it had come to its attention that “the small rivets on the toy can come loose, which results in a potential choking hazard, especially for smaller children.”

It issued the product recall in an advisory posted on the De-

partment of Trade and Industry website.

“Safety is a top priority for IKEA and therefore, we are taking precautionary measures and recalling Blavingad fishing game multicolor due to a potential choking hazard,” it added.

According to IKEA, customers that purchased the Blavingad fishing game multicolor can return the toy to the company’s store in Pasay City for a full refund, with the store receipt not being required.

It also urged customers who own the toy to stop using it and to contact IKEA for a refund. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**



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