

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,607.13

▲ 50.93 PTS.

▲ 0.77%

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 1, 2023

BusinessWorld

PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P659.00 +P34.00 +5.44%	ACEN ACEN Corp. P6.31 -P0.03 -0.47%	AEV Aboltiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P53.85 -P0.15 -0.28%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P12.72 +P0.14 +1.11%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P28.85 +P0.35 +1.23%	AP Aboltiz Power Corp. P37.50 -P0.35 -0.92%	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P124.00 +P0.60 +0.49%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P104.00 -P5.80 -5.28%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P15.60 -P0.66 -4.06%	DMC DMCI Holdings, Inc. P10.70 +P0.14 +1.33%
EMI Emperador, Inc. P20.85 +P0.05 +0.24%	GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,808.00 +P33.00 +1.86%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P513.00 -P6.00 -1.16%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P198.80 -P1.00 -0.50%	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P238.00 -P2.00 -0.83%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P49.30 ---	LTG LT Group, Inc. P10.20 -P0.30 -2.86%	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P61.35 +P3.15 +5.41%	MER Manila Electric Co. P313.00 -P4.80 -1.51%	MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P11.44 -P0.62 -5.14%
MPI Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P4.18 +P0.10 +2.45%	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P31.05 -P0.45 -1.43%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P30.05 +P0.05 +0.17%	SM SM Investments Corp. P889.00 +P37.00 +4.34%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P110.50 -P4.50 -3.91%	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P34.80 +P0.75 +2.20%	TEL PLDT Inc. P1,318.00 +P33.00 +2.57%	UBP Union Bank of the Philippines P87.65 -P0.30 -0.34%	URC Universal Robina Corp. P136.40 -P0.10 -0.07%	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P30.70 -P0.90 -2.85%

Megawide, Singapore firm plan \$300-M data center

MEGAWIDE Construction Corp. signed a shareholders' agreement with a Singapore-based group for a \$300-million or about P16.5-billion data center project as part of its plan of pivoting toward digital infrastructure.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, the construction company said it signed on Feb. 28 the agreement with Evolution Data Centres Pte. Ltd. (EDC), Evolution Data Centres Philippines, Inc., and Evolution DC Capital Pte. Ltd.

"Megawide is very excited about this venture because it represents the company's first investment in the digital infrastructure space," Mega-

wide's Chief Business Development Officer Jaime Raphael C. Feliciano said.

"Digitalization has greatly affected enterprises and consumers alike and data centers are at the very core of this new reality," he added.

The project will involve the long-term development of a 69-megawatt (MW) colocation data center in Cavite. Its first phase will cover a 23-MW deployment spread over five years inside a four-hectare property.

"Rising data consumption and strong governmental support for digital transformation are causing hyper-scalers and cloud service providers to consider

the Philippines as they expand their operations," EDC Chief Executive Officer Darren Webb said.

"We are delighted to be partnering with Megawide to develop this innovative data center in this exciting high-growth region," he added.

Megawide described EDC as "among the fastest-growing players in large-scale digital infrastructure development, deploying data center capacity, at scale, across multiple high-growth markets in Asia-Pacific."

According to the disclosure, the transaction is still subject to the approval of the Philippine Competition Commission and all closing conditions.

The approval is expected to be within the next 30 to 60 days.

Once cleared, Megawide and EDC are set to enter into subscription agreements for shares in Evolution Data Centres Philippines and a company to be set up to hold land for the data centers. Megawide is expected to own around 49% and 60% of the outstanding capital stock of the two new entities, respectively.

Megawide operates the Mactan-Cebu International Airport and landport Paranaque Integrated Terminal Exchange.

On the stock market on Wednesday, Megawide shares lost 43 centavos or 10.91% to P3.51 each. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Vivant energy unit to acquire solar power facility in Bulacan

CEBU-BASED Vivant Corp. said its unit Vivant Energy Corp. executed a sale and purchase agreement with Cleantech Global Renewables, Inc. for the acquisition of a solar power plant in Bulacan with a target capacity of 22-megawatt peak and ancillary facilities.

In a stock exchange disclosure on Wednesday, Vivant Energy said its recently acquired project company, San Idefonso Alternative Energy Corp. (SIAEC), had signed the agreement and a deed of absolute sale with Cleantech.

"Our investment in SIAEC is in line with our goal to increase our renewable energy portfolio to 30% by 2030," Vivant President Emil Andre M. Garcia said in a media release.

Vivant said \$10.93 million of the \$15.5 million purchase price was already paid. The remaining amount will be allocated for the payment of the development fees and related expenses.

Last month, Vivant announced that its board approved in December 2022 the acquisition of the project company that will own and operate the solar power plant facility in Bulacan.

Vivant Energy said that it signed a share sale and purchase agreement with Cleantech to acquire its 1.25 million shares in SIAEC.

"We will continue to look for opportunities, not just in solar but also in other technologies as part of our thrust to support countrywide development and improve everyday living in our communities," he added.

The transaction is expected to increase Vivant's renewable energy capacity.

The SIAEC project is expected to generate about 30 gigawatt-hours per year, which translates to a 18,000-ton carbon dioxide reduction. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

CreditSights: Smart closure order to have limited impact on PLDT

CREDIT analyst CreditSights said it expects the closure notice on Smart Communications, Inc.'s Makati office to have limited impact on parent firm PLDT Inc. as the telecommunications giant has stable credit fundamentals.

"We agree with PLDT that the physical padlocking of Smart's headquarters is unlikely to materially affect operations," CreditSights said in a report.

In a press release on Monday, the Makati City local government unit (LGU) said that it had issued a closure order against Smart for operating without a business permit since 2019 and for owing the city P3.2 billion in franchise tax covering January 2012 to December 2015.

The case goes back to 2016 when the Office of the City Treasurer assessed that the company supposedly owes the local government more than P3.2 billion in franchise tax over four years.

The Makati LGU requested Smart to submit a breakdown of revenues and business taxes paid in all branches nationwide. Smart declined the request, citing a lack of jurisdiction by the LGU.

The telecommunications company filed a petition for review before the Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 122 to seek nullification of the notice of assessment.

The Makati court ruled in favor of the city government, a decision that was upheld in an appeal filed before the Court of Tax Appeals. The company is yet to elevate the case to the Supreme Court.

According to CreditSights, there had been no notable instances of large Philippine corporations being shut down due to unpaid taxes.

"PLDT also affirmed that there was no tax evasion at play, and that the dispute involved an incorrect assessment of taxes payable. Considering the quantum of unpaid taxes is relatively low at P3.2 billion, we believe PLDT may prioritize restoring operational normalcy over negotiating lower tax liabilities," it said.

However, CreditSights said that the issue could have some damage to PLDT's reputation after just being hit by its P48-billion budget overrun.

"Coupled with the recent US securities class action lawsuit (which we think has limited material operational impact but could hurt PLDT's reputation), we believe corporate governance flaws could remain an overhang on the company," it added.

On Wednesday, Smart said that it has submitted to the Makati City Office of the City Treasurer the documents requested by the city government.

In a press release, PLDT's wireless unit said the requested documents pertain to the company's outstanding local taxation issues with the Makati City LGU.

"The submission of the documents is part of ongoing discussions between the company and the Makati City LGU who both aim to arrive at a resolution to the matter at hand," the company 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. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Mega Global names new chief executive as founder steps down

CANNED sardines manufacturer Mega Global Corp. has named a new chief executive officer as the company inaugurated its P1-billion manufacturing plant in Sto. Tomas, Batangas on Wednesday.

During the plant's launch, Mega Global Founder William Tiu Lim announced that he is stepping down as the company's chief executive and will be replaced by Michelle Tiu Lim-Chan, who served as chief operating officer.

"We would like our children, our younger generations, to take over... effective today," he said during the launch. He will remain as the board chairman.

Mega Global's new facility currently has one operational manufacturing line with a daily production capacity of 300,000 cans.

The Batangas plant is the company's first plant in Luzon and its third in the country after the two Zamboanga plants. Its construction was announced in November 2020.

According to Mega Global Chief Growth and Development Officer Marvin Tiu Lim, there are still two additional production lines to be placed in the new plant.

"Currently we only have one line here and then we ordered another two lines coming. It's not yet here. That will beef it up to 900,000 [cans], plus in Zamboanga, we have 2.4 million cans. But this is just a capacity, this all depends on the fish catch," he said.

He said that Mega Global is eyeing an 18% sales increase this year after posting the same growth rate last year. He did not provide specific figures.

He said the company is banking on increased distribution and increased output with the new manufacturing plant, and the introduction of new products to reach its sales target.

"The drivers would be increased distribution, increased productivity in terms of production because of our new plants, new products that we will be producing and selling to the market and beefing up our sales team, beefing up our distribution system, investing in more down-line operations meaning developing grassroots distribution, making sure that our products are accessible to more and more Filipinos," Mr. Lim said.



MICHELLE TIU LIM-CHAN

Mr. Lim said that Mega Global is expecting an improved supply of tamban used in production following the end of the closed fishing in Zamboanga.

"Last year, there's a big shortage of *tamban*," he said. "[From] Nov. 30 to March 1, there is the closed fishing season so that the fish can reproduce. We're hoping that this season will be good and fish will be abundant so we can lower the price, provide better

fish and make sure that availability is there," Mr. Lim said.

"We're very hopeful fish catch will be better both in Zamboanga and in the Bicol region. Hopefully, we'll be able to provide more stocks," he added.

The new plant is under Mega Global's subsidiary, Mega Prime Foods Inc., which is in charge of the parent firm's sales and distribution.

Meanwhile, Ms. Tiu Lim-Chan said that the plan for Mega Global to have an initial public offering (IPO) is still in the works. The company previously said that it aims to conduct an IPO by 2025.

"We are in the process to be IPO-able. Definitely, we want to make our company IPO-able. No definite timetable. It is in the works," she said.

Trade Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual told reporters in a separate interview that Mega Global's Sto. Tomas facility was registered under the Board of Investments on Feb. 28, which allows it to avail of fiscal incentives such as an income tax holiday under Republic Act No. 11534 or the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Manulife

Single Pricing Investment Funds of Variable Life Insurance Contracts

Fund	Unit Price			
	Current Week	February 28, 2023	Previous Week	February 21, 2023
Peso Secure Fund	1.671	1.671	1.671	1.671
Peso Diversified Value Fund	1.848	1.848	1.848	1.848
Peso Growth Fund	2.813	2.813	2.813	2.813
Peso Dynamic Allocation Fund	0.988	0.988	0.988	0.988
Peso Target Distribution Fund	0.758	0.758	0.758	0.758
Peso Cash Fund	1.034	1.034	1.034	1.034
Peso Wealth Optimizer 2006 Fund	0.917	0.917	0.917	0.917
Peso Wealth Optimizer 2031 Fund	0.878	0.878	0.878	0.878
Peso Wealth Optimizer 2036 Fund	0.866	0.866	0.866	0.866
Powerhouse Fund	0.843	0.843	0.843	0.843
Empire Fund	0.851	0.851	0.851	0.851
USD Secure Fund	1.462	1.462	1.462	1.462
USD Asia Pacific Bond Fund	1.025	1.025	1.025	1.025
USD Global Target Income Fund	0.720	0.720	0.720	0.720
USD ASEAN Growth Fund	1.551	1.551	1.551	1.551
USD Asia Pacific Property Income Fund	0.796	0.796	0.796	0.796
PNP Asia Pacific Property Income Fund	0.825	0.825	0.825	0.825
PNP Tiger Growth Fund	0.557	0.557	0.557	0.557
USD Tiger Growth Fund	0.559	0.559	0.559	0.559
PNP Global Preferred Securities Income Fund	0.955	0.955	0.955	0.955
USD Global Preferred Securities Income Fund	0.815	0.815	0.815	0.815
PNP US Growth Fund	1.012	1.012	1.012	1.012
USD US Growth Fund	0.856	0.856	0.856	0.856
PNP Global Health Fund	1.031	1.031	1.031	1.031
USD Global Health Fund	0.979	0.979	0.979	0.979
PNP Global Multi-Asset Income Fund	1.035	1.035	1.035	1.035
USD Global Multi-Asset Income Fund	0.977	0.977	0.977	0.977

Manulife

Dual Pricing Investment Funds of Variable Life Insurance Contracts

Fund	Unit Bid Price			
	Current Week	February 28, 2023	Previous Week	February 21, 2023
Peso Bond Fund	2.850	2.850	2.850	2.850
Peso Stable Fund	2.804	2.804	2.804	2.804
Peso Equity Fund	2.104	2.104	2.104	2.104
Peso Balanced Fund	1.012	1.012	1.012	1.012
Peso Target Income Fund	0.774	0.774	0.774	0.774
U.S. Dollar Bond Fund	2.093	2.093	2.093	2.093

Manulife China Bank

Single Pricing Investment Funds of Variable Life Insurance Contracts

Fund	Unit Price			
	Current Week	February 28, 2023	Previous Week	February 21, 2023
Peso Secure Fund	1.670	1.670	1.670	1.670
Peso Diversified Value Fund	1.819	1.819	1.819	1.819
Peso Growth Fund	2.741	2.741	2.741	2.741
Peso Dynamic Allocation Fund	0.984	0.984	0.984	0.984
Peso Target Distribution Fund	0.753	0.753	0.753	0.753
Peso Cash Fund	1.002	1.002	1.002	1.002
Peso Wealth Optimizer 2006 Fund	0.863	0.863	0.863	0.863
Peso Wealth Optimizer 2031 Fund	0.821	0.821	0.821	0.821
Peso Wealth Optimizer 2036 Fund	0.800	0.800	0.800	0.800
Powerhouse Fund	0.843	0.843	0.843	0.843
USD Secure Fund	1.440	1.440	1.440	1.440
USD Asia Pacific Bond Fund	1.005	1.005	1.005	1.005
USD Global Target Income Fund	0.725	0.725	0.725	0.725
USD ASEAN Growth Fund	1.597	1.597	1.597	1.597
Clearwater Dollar Fixed Income VUL Fund	0.974	0.974	0.974	0.974
USD Asia First Fund	1.152	1.152	1.152	1.152
USD Asia Pacific Property Income Fund	0.790	0.790	0.790	0.790
PNP Asia Pacific Property Income Fund	0.830	0.830	0.830	0.830
PNP Tiger Growth Fund	0.563	0.563	0.563	0.563
USD Tiger Growth Fund	0.567	0.567	0.567	0.567
PNP Global Preferred Securities Income Fund	0.951	0.951	0.951	0.951
USD Global Preferred Securities Income Fund	0.825	0.825	0.825	0.825
PNP US Growth Fund	0.995	0.995	0.995	0.995
USD US Growth Fund	0.852	0.852	0.852	0.852
PNP Global Health Fund	1.030	1.030	1.030	1.030
USD Global Health Fund	0.983	0.983	0.983	0.983
PNP Global Multi-Asset Income Fund	1.002	1.002	1.002	1.002
USD Global Multi-Asset Income Fund	0.967	0.967	0.967	0.967

Manulife China Bank

Dual Pricing Investment Funds of Variable Life Insurance Contracts

Fund	Unit Offer Price			
	Current Week	February 28, 2023	Previous Week	February 21, 2023
Peso Bond Fund	1.950	1.950	1.950	1.950
Peso Stable Fund	1.790	1.790	1.790	1.790
Peso Equity Fund	1.887	1.887	1.887	1.887
Peso Balanced Fund	0.990	0.990	0.990	0.990
Peso Target Income Fund	0.748	0.748	0.748	0.748
U.S. Dollar Bond Fund	1.495	1.495	1.495	1.495