

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,448.87

▼ 20.55 PTS.

▼ 0.31%

PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P641.50 -P6.50 -1.00%	ACEN ACEN Corp. P5.93 -P0.06 -1%	AEV Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P51.50 -P0.05 -0.1%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P12.48 -P0.08 -0.64%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P26.45 -P0.60 -2.22%	AP Aboitiz Power Corp. P37.40 +P0.40 +1.08%	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P131.00 +P0.80 +0.61%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P100.90 -P0.60 -0.59%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P12.22 -P0.16 -1.29%	DMC DMCI Holdings, Inc. P10.78 ---
EMI Emperador, Inc. P20.95 -P0.05 -0.24%	GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,780.00 -P18.00 -1%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P494.20 +P9.20 +1.9%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P211.00 ---	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P212.80 +P0.60 +0.28%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P48.75 -P0.60 -1.22%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P9.99 ---	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P58.20 -P0.15 -0.26%	MER Manila Electric Co. P319.00 +P1.00 +0.31%	MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P9.26 -P0.19 -2.01%
MPI Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P3.86 +P0.09 +2.39%	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P32.30 -P0.20 -0.62%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P28.60 -P0.70 -2.39%	SM SM Investments Corp. P884.00 -P6.00 -0.67%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P107.80 +P2.30 +2.18%	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P32.85 ---	TEL PLDT Inc. P1,280.00 +P20.00 +1.59%	UBP Union Bank of the Philippines P84.65 -P0.25 -0.29%	URC Universal Robina Corp. P141.20 -P1.90 -1.33%	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P29.00 +P0.40 +1.4%

Cebu Landmasters sets P13.5-billion capex for 2023

LISTED Visayas-Mindanao property developer Cebu Landmasters, Inc. (CLI) has set its capital expenditures (capex) for the year at P13.5 billion, a 23% increase from last year's P10.98 billion.

As per the company's statement on Thursday, the majority of the capex (83%) will be used for project development, while a smaller proportion (11%) will be used for land acquisition.

The company has a pipeline of 19 projects with a total worth of P29.75 billion, it noted. At the same time, Cebu Landmasters said it intends to launch three

hospitality projects this year, namely The Pad, Lyf Cebu City at Base Line Center, and Citadines Bacolod City, as part of its efforts to expand its gross leasable area with an additional 4,000 square meters.

"The company is also setting its sights on a Luzon entry with a landbank buildup that will begin this year," it added.

Cebu Landmasters recorded a normalized attributable net income of P3.17 billion for 2022, representing a 32% rise from P2.40 billion the previous year.

"Our robust 2022 performance is a testament to our growing commitment and

leadership in the Vis-Min region," Cebu Landmasters Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Jose R. Soberano III said.

"We have been recording double-digit growth across all segments since our 2017 IPO (Initial Public Offering). We are finally setting our sights on Luzon in the next (two) years," Mr. Soberano added.

The company reported a 40.3% increase in revenues to P15.66 billion from P11.16 billion, attributed to strong sales, exceptional collections, and important achievements; in addition, its unrecognized revenues for future recognition amounted to P29 billion.

Real estate sales grew 40.4% to P15.44 billion from the P11 billion in 2021, driven by significant progress in the company's construction projects.

Last year, the company constructed around 5,000 residential units across 16 ventures worth a total of P19.36 billion.

"Sales velocity of these launches hit peak levels with most developments fully taken up within days. CLI's first project in a new area, Puerto Princesa, for instance, was 85%-sold out in less than a week," the company said.

Revenues from hotel operations surged by 71% to reach P83 million, whereas rentals increased by 7% to P79.28 million from its previous figure of P74.27 million, primarily as a result of higher lease rates and new tenants at the new corporate center.

Casa Mira, the company's economical brand, made up the majority of revenue at 47%, with the mid-market Garden Series and high-end Premier Masters contributing 27% and 24%, respectively.

Cebu Landmasters shares closed 5.32% lower at P2.49 apiece on Thursday. — **Adrian H. Halili**

EEI sees benefits from full foreign ownership in industry

YUCHENGO-led EEI Corp. (EEI) said the construction sector is expected to benefit from the opening of the industry to full foreign ownership.

"The structural reforms that promote foreign direct investment such as the Public Services Act (PSA) and the EO (Executive Order) to adopt the Philippine Development Plan, that the government is trying to institute, have the potential to impact growth in the manufacturing, renewable energy, and logistics sectors," Henry D. Antonio, chief operations officer of EEI, told the stock exchange on Thursday.

Mr. Antonio will serve as the company's chief executive officer starting next month.

The implementing rules and regulations of Republic Act No. 11659, which amends the PSA, took effect on April 4. This law allows full foreign ownership in public services such as telecommunications, airlines, expressways, and railways.

Further, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. has also signed an EO adopting the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028, which sets the country's roadmap for economic recovery.

EEI said these present fresh catalysts that will drive growth and opportunities for construction services for both light and heavy industries.

The construction company said that it remains confident in the company's future, but it will approach the year

"with cautious optimism amid economic uncertainties in the global and domestic front."

"The prospects remain positive for EEI despite potential headwinds in the property sector and delays in the implementation of government infrastructure projects as its market position allows the company to keep thriving amid a short-term environment with fewer new capital projects," EEI said.

The company added that it will continue to pursue international opportunities to maximize its steel fabrication capabilities.

It also said that Al Rushaid Construction Co. Ltd. (ARCC), EEI's joint venture with Al Rushaid Petroleum Investment

Co., will bring numerous "growth opportunities" after winning more contracts from major engineering, procurement, and construction companies.

"Both ARCC and EEI's domestic construction operation have undertaken a reorganization to improve commercial approach, internal systems and processes as well as project delivery," Mr. Antonio said.

EEI added that its current bids for several domestic projects will bring revenue visibility for the company over a longer term.

At the local bourse on Thursday, shares in the company declined by two centavos or 0.74% to end at P2.70 apiece. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

Vitarich net income grows 44% to P129M

VITARICH Corp. (VITA) on Thursday reported a net income of P129 million for 2022, up 44.21% from P89 million previously, owing to the growth in food and feed revenues.

"[The year] 2022 brought many challenges to families and business particularly as inflation intensified and food prices rose by double digits," said Vitarich President and Chief Executive Officer Ricardo Manuel "Rocco" M. Sarmiento in a statement.

"Despite this difficult environment, our team at VITA worked tirelessly and delivered solid revenue growth and improved net income," he added.

Revenues for 2022 totaled nearly P12 billion, a 23% increase year on year from P9.72 billion a year earlier.

The company also reported that its gross profit grew by 24% to P1.1 billion, while operating profit climbed by 21% to P223.2 million.

"The impact of cost inflation was partially offset by volume growth, pricing changes, and efficiencies," the company said.

The food segment, which accounted for 52% of the total revenue, saw a 48% increase in revenue to reach P6.2 billion.

The company attributed the growth to the higher demand from food services and restaurants, as well as its newly released value-added products.

It launched new products under Cook's Flavor Origins, including French Roast, Mediterranean Roast, and South African Roast.

Last year, the company expanded its operations in various areas such as Isabela and Bicol Region in Luzon; Samar and Leyte in Visayas; and Zamboanga City, Bukidnon, Marawi, Sultan Kudarat, and Sarangani in Mindanao.

Likewise, revenues in the feeds segment, which accounted for 44% of the total, inched up by 11% to P5.2 billion, backed by the 18% increase in pricing and 23% increase in input costs.

"The segment made significant progress towards operational milestones by increasing the number of distributors, megadealers, and retail feed outlets across Capiz, Aklan, and Central Negros over the course of the year," the company said.

Meanwhile, farm revenues fell by 32% to P529 million due to the shortage of day-old chicks, which accounted for 4% of the overall revenues.

A fair value adjustment on biological assets of about P12.1 million was recognized as part of revenues and P1.1 million as part of cost of goods.

Vitarich said the cost of goods grew by 23% to P10.9 billion on higher sales volume and input costs.

The average cost of raw materials, such as wheat, soybean, and corn, surged by 25%, accounting for 70% of the total feed expenses.

The company also cited the pressure on handling and operating costs driven by the price increases in fuel, energy, and labor.

"Looking ahead, the company expects another year of strong revenue growth as well as better margins in 2023, encouraged by an expansion in its sales channels and the positive reception of the recently launched value-added products," said Vitarich.

Vitarich is a poultry integrator and manufacturer of food products and animal feeds in the Philippines.

On the stock market on Thursday, Vitarich retained its shares at 63 centavos apiece. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

AGI sees 6% profit rise for 2022

TAN-LED Alliance Global Group, Inc. (AGI) on Thursday reported a 6% rise in net income to P25.2 billion for 2022, up from P23.8 billion previously, boosted by the recovery of its business segments following the country's sustained recovery.

"However, increased inflationary pressures, higher cost of raw material, and ongoing distribution bottlenecks pushed overall costs and expenses to grow at a faster pace," the company said in a disclosure to the stock exchange.

The company also reported a 4.7% decline in attributable net income to P16.1 billion from its prior year figure of P16.9 billion.

Alliance Global achieved a 20% growth in the previous year, with a total revenue of P183.6 billion, compared to P152.6 billion in 2021.

"The country's sustained economic recovery helped propel the sequential top-line improvement of all our business segments last year, leading to our record performance in consolidated revenues in 2022," Alliance Global Chief Executive Officer Kevin L. Tan said in a statement.

"It also helped that our Group's diversified portfolio has remained agile to spot and seize opportunities in the marketplace," Mr. Tan added.

Alliance Global is the parent company of Megaworld Corp., Travellers International Hotel Group, Inc., Emperador, Inc., Golden Arches Development Corp., and Infracorp Development Corp.

According to Mr. Tan, all the company's businesses exhibited a sharp recovery in 2022.

Emperador booked a slightly higher net profit of P10.1 billion compared to P10 billion in the previous year, driven by higher sales in its whiskey and brandy segments. Its top line also recorded a 12.3% rise to P62.8 billion from P55.9 billion a year ago.

The group which runs McDonald's Philippines recorded a more than double profit growth to P1.8 billion from P869 million the previous year.

Golden Arches Development achieved a record level top line of P34.4 billion, representing a 38.2% surge from the previous year's P24.9 billion.

"Our spirits, gaming and entertainment, as well as QSR (quick service restaurants) units have registered unprecedented levels of revenue last year, driven by their respective strong brand equity and effective marketing strategies," Mr. Tan said.

Meanwhile, township developer Megaworld saw an attributable net income of P13.46 billion for 2022, higher by 0.2% from P13.43 billion, it said in an earlier report.

The company also disclosed a rise of 17.1% in consolidated revenues to P59.5 billion from P50.8 billion in the previous year.

"Our real estate business performed mostly above its peers, particularly in terms of keeping office rentals steady, higher-than-industry occupancy rates for its offices and hotels, and robust residential pre-sales," Mr. Tan said. — **Adrian H. Halili**

GSIS invests P1.46 billion in Nickel Asia

THE Government Service Insurance System (GSIS) on Thursday said it had invested P1.46 billion in listed mining company Nickel Asia Corp. (NAC).

"GSIS continues to look for ways to lengthen its fund life through viable investment opportunities such as successful vertically integrated mining ore production and processing business of NAC," GSIS President and General Manager Jose Arnulfo "Wick" A. Veloso said in a statement.

The investment sought to increase funds for the "member's benefit" and to back the electronic vehicle industry which is the key market of the mining sector.

The partnership was sealed through a block sale approved by the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) on Wednesday, involving the purchase of a total of 233,558,683 common shares.

"GSIS's investment in NAC shows that it is possible for a company to grow responsibly," said NAC Chief Executive Officer and President Martin Antonio G. Zamora in a statement.

"Our commitment to sustainable development is something we take seriously, and we

are happy to attract like-minded entities that believe in the value of responsible mining and renewable energy," he added.

According to the company's financial report, it recorded a 1.5% rise in its attributable net income to reach P7.93 billion in the previous year.

Revenues climbed 2.2% to P28 billion in 2022 from P27.4 billion in the previous year.

"Maybe GSIS viewed the NIKL acquisition to be a discount to market since it's been traversing within a range that's especially close to previous lows," Regina Capital Development Corp. Head of Sales Luis A. Limlingan said in a Viber message.

"The vertical integration of mining ore production and processing business" seemed to be the selling point of NAC that attracted the state-run pension fund to invest, he added.

The company aims to become a premier environmental, social, and governance investment and among the top 25 companies under PSE by 2025.

On Thursday, shares of Nickel Asia rose 35 centavos or 5.38% to close at P6.86 apiece. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

Metro Retail Stores Group turns profitable

METRO Retail Stores Group, Inc. (MRSGI) recorded a net income of P917.3 million for 2022, a turnaround from its net loss of P318.1 million in the prior year, the company said on Thursday.

"[The company] was able to display its resilience registering consistent encouraging performance across all quarters and ultimately closing the year with positive results," Metro Retail President and Chief Operating Officer Manuel C. Alberto said in a statement.

"MRSGI marked this year as its leap from the net loss incurred during the pandemic to delivering a buoyant financial outcome. And we look forward to sustaining this growth in the coming years," Mr. Alberto added.

Metro Retail's revenues went up 22.2% to P38.35 billion from P31.38 billion recorded last year, mainly driven by an increase in net sales for the year.

The company's sales for the year grew 22.1% to P38.1 billion from the P31.2 billion, driven by consumer spending during the holiday season in the fourth quarter. Rentals also increased 41.3% to P243.66 million from P172.47 million the previous year.

Same-store sales growth went up 19.2% due to continued store traffic.

Metro Retail's general merchandise business rose 54.3%, while food retail also grew 13.1%.

"Amid the price pressures and supply chain challenges, the full reopening of businesses and improvement in labor market conditions primarily drove the growth in consumer confidence since the pandemic," the company said.

The company's expenses rose by 18%, reaching P36.94 billion from the previous report of P31.3 billion. During the year, the company added two new supermarkets to its portfolio, bringing the total number of its stores across the country to 62.

It has also commenced the development of a new distribution center in Santa Rosa, Laguna, with the intention of facilitating its current and upcoming network.

"The company also launched several new projects in its store expansion pipeline in strategic areas across Luzon and Visayas," it said.

Shares in Metro Retail Stores closed 0.71% higher at P1.41 apiece on Thursday. — **Adrian H. Halili**