

## Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,520.44

▲ 74.09 PTS.

▲ 1.14%

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BusinessWorld

## PSEI MEMBER STOCKS

<b>AC</b> Ayala Corp. P638.50 +P6.00 +0.95%	<b>ACEN</b> ACEN Corp. P6.06 -P0.09 -1.46%	<b>AEV</b> Aboltiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P52.00 +P1.55 +3.07%	<b>AGI</b> Alliance Global Group, Inc. P12.10 +P0.02 +0.17%	<b>ALI</b> Ayala Land, Inc. P26.20 +P0.05 +0.19%	<b>AP</b> Aboltiz Power Corp. P37.50 +P0.30 +0.81%	<b>BDO</b> BDO Unibank, Inc. P135.00 +P5.50 +4.25%	<b>BPI</b> Bank of the Philippine Islands P102.80 +P2.60 +2.59%	<b>CNVRG</b> Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P12.40 -P0.20 -1.59%	<b>DMC</b> DMCI Holdings, Inc. P10.68 ---
<b>EMI</b> Emperador, Inc. P20.95 ---	<b>GLO</b> Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,783.00 -P2.00 -0.11%	<b>GTCAP</b> GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P480.00 -P0.40 -0.08%	<b>ICT</b> International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P213.60 +P3.60 +1.71%	<b>JFC</b> Jollibee Foods Corp. P217.20 -P2.60 -1.18%	<b>JGS</b> JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P49.25 +P0.40 +0.82%	<b>LTG</b> LT Group, Inc. P10.02 +P0.05 +0.5%	<b>MBT</b> Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P58.50 +P0.10 +0.17%	<b>MER</b> Manila Electric Co. P321.00 +P2.20 +0.69%	<b>MONDE</b> Monde Nissin Corp. P9.43 +P0.18 +1.95%
<b>MPI</b> Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P3.86 +P0.13 +3.49%	<b>PGOLD</b> Puregold Price Club, Inc. P32.60 +P0.10 +0.31%	<b>SCC</b> Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P28.00 ---	<b>SM</b> SM Investments Corp. P900.00 ---	<b>SMC</b> San Miguel Corp. P106.20 -P0.50 -0.47%	<b>SMPH</b> SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P33.50 +P0.50 +1.52%	<b>TEL</b> PLDT Inc. P1,269.00 -P2.00 -0.16%	<b>UBP</b> Union Bank of the Philippines P84.50 -P0.10 -0.12%	<b>URC</b> Universal Robina Corp. P145.00 +P4.10 +2.91%	<b>WLCON</b> Wilcon Depot, Inc. P30.30 +P0.50 +1.68%

## PLDT names officials to handle vacated key posts

PANGILINAN-led PLDT Inc. has designated officers-in-charge for the departments previously handled by officers who voluntarily vacated their key posts earlier this week.

In a regulatory filing on Thursday, the listed telecommunications company has assigned Danny Y. Yu, senior vice-president and group controller, to be in charge of the finance department after the early retirement of Anabelle L. Chua, who was senior vice-president, chief financial officer and chief risk management head.

PLDT has appointed First Vice-President Bernadette C. Salinas as the acting head of the supply chain management department previously headed by Mary Rose L. Dela Paz, who had voluntarily resigned as senior vice-president and chief procurement officer.

For its network department, PLDT has assigned First Vice-President and Deputy Network Head Roderick S. Santiago to be the officer-in-charge, following the early retirement of Mario G. Tamayo, senior vice-president and network head.

"No replacements have been designated for the roles of Alexander S. Kibanoff, who availed of the Company's Manpower Reduction Program and who was voluntarily separated from service effective April 16; and Wilson S. Bobier, who was voluntarily separated from service due to his voluntary resignation effective April 16," the company said.

Meanwhile, credit analyst CreditSights said that the key officials who were announced to depart PLDT could have been the "parties deemed responsible" for the company's budget overrun.

"On the face of it, we believe these officers could have been the 'parties deemed responsible' for PLDT's capex (capital expenditure) overrun, despite various seemingly benign reasons provided by the company for their departure," CreditSights said.

"Given the departed officers' job titles and positions coincide with the company's earlier statements, and given this was a simultaneous departure by five senior personnel, we are inclined to think these cannot be random, unconnected departures," it added.

The credit analyst also said that the departure of the five officers could induce short-to-medium-term operational challenges.

"We think day-to-day operations of the company could be hampered, strategic directions could be less clear, and execution

risks of ongoing projects could be higher," CreditSights said.

"Given the seniority of the departed officers and their relatively long tenors with the company, we think it could be more challenging for the company to fill in the gaps," it said, citing Ms. Dela Paz who has been with the company for over six years and Ms. Chua for over 20 years.

However, CreditSights said the departures could also demonstrate the telco's commitment to improving its long-term operations and corporate governance.

"We see a possibility that these officers were let go by the company after 'substantially completed external investigations' found negligence or bad decision-making on their parts," it said.

"Even though higher management would have clearly been aware of the immediate operation-

al impacts from the absence of the senior officers, the fact it remained firm in its drastic turnovers could suggest a strong commitment towards ensuring proper accountability and governance," it added.

In December last year, the telco said that it would undertake a management reorganization process to address weaknesses that allowed the budget overrun to occur.

The statement came after PLDT's internal probe showed a P48-billion budget overrun in the past four years.

On March 23, the company said that the review conducted by an external counsel for the period 2019-2022 showed "no evidence of fraud, intentional concealment, or bad faith conduct on the part of any employee of the company and no basis to restate the company's historical financial statements."

Post-2022, its outstanding commitment to its major vendors for the acquisition of property and equipment was reduced to P33 billion, which the company said resulted from PLDT's entry into settlement and mutual release agreements in March this year.

"Overall, we maintain our expectation that the capex overrun was due to management missteps and not intentional fraud, but remain watchful of negative headlines risks," CreditSights said.

On Thursday, shares in PLDT went down by two pesos or 0.16% to P1,269 apiece.

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**

## PSE set to introduce new sectoral indices — official

THE Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc. (PSE) is set to introduce new sectoral indices this year as it aims to update the classification of listed companies, a company official said on Thursday.

"Hopefully [it will be introduced] by [the fourth quarter] and that's already set in stone," PSE Assistant Vice-President and Capital Markets Development Division Head Mark Frederick V. Visda told reporters on the sidelines, an event led by the Shareholders' Association of the Philippines (SharePHIL).

"It's really a matter of us putting together some things, but in terms of the revision, that's it," he added. In a report, Mr. Visda said that the PSE will introduce these sectors: consumer; energy and utilities; mining and materials; and technology, media and telecommunications. The move seeks to update company classification in the index.

"We think it's really about updating how we classify companies in terms of their sectors," Mr. Visda said.

The revision was due in part to listed companies diversifying their businesses to other sectors, he added.

"We thought that we should capture these changes by revising or updating our sectors," Mr. Visda said.

The indices, once updated, will total eight from the existing six, with the services sector along with the mining and oil sector either to be replaced or reclassified.

"Also, it is high time that we introduce a consumer sector since that is something that our economy is really dependent on, he said.

The financials, holding firms, and property sectors will be retained.

The local bourse operator benchmarked the MSCI index and other global classification standards as it aligns its sectors.

"If you talk to investors, they are a lot more updated than what we have now. So, we just want to align also with what people are trying to use," he said.

In terms of impact, the new sectoral indices will see more relevance to investors tracking sector performances, he added. — **Adrian H. Halili**

## Upson books higher income, revenues for 2022

MANILA, Philippines — Upson International Corp. (UPSON), a newly listed firm and the country's largest retailer of personal computers (PCs) and information technology (IT) products, has booked higher income and revenues for 2022.

Based on the company's annual financial statements of December 31, 2022, Upson booked a net income of P530 million, or 33.25 percent higher than the P403 million net income booked in the same period in 2021.

At the same time, the company's revenues rose by 10.4 percent to P9.4 billion in 2022 from P8.5 billion recorded in 2021.

UPSON is a retail company that operates several retail outlets such as Octagon Computer Superstore, Micro Valley, Gadget King, as well as concept and specialty stores like Acer, HP, Brother, Silvertec

and Octagon Mobile in select locations.

As of December 2022, UPSON operates 207 branches nationwide and a total of six warehouses, located in Manila, Cebu, Cagayan De Oro, and Davao City.

The main driver of the company's financial growth can be attributed to expansion of its branch network which grew additional 24 branches compared to 183 in 2021.

"Our financial performance is a testament to our commitment to be the shopping gateway to technology. This commitment shall be our legacy contribution to support the digital transformation of our country. This is why we are continuously expanding our retail footprint nationwide, along with warehouses and logistics operations, to reach underserved markets," shared Upson President and CEO Arlene Sy.

## Atlas Mining reports 78% profit slide

ATLAS Consolidated Mining and Development Corp. on Thursday reported a 78% fall in its first-quarter net income to P264 million mainly due to lower ore grade and milling tonnage.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, the listed mining firm also cited the lower income of its Carmen Copper Corp. subsidiary because of a nonrecurring noncash gain booked in 2022.

Gross revenues for the first three months of the year slipped 10% to P4.93 billion from P5.49 billion in the same period last year.

Atlas Mining said the price of copper metal was down 11% to \$4.05 per pound from \$4.56 previously while the price of gold rose slightly to \$1.89 from \$1.85 per ounce.

Earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, and amortization dipped 35% to P1.69 billion this year from nearly P2.60 billion a year ago. Cash costs rose 10% to P3.22 billion from P2.94 billion in 2022.

During the period, Atlas Mining said Carmen Copper reported lower output and shipment of gold and copper.

Carmen Copper recorded a 9% decline in milling tonnage to 4.18

million tons from 4.57 million tons.

The production of copper metal and gold both inched down by 1% to 19.88 million pounds and 5,975 ounces, respectively.

Atlas Mining recently reported that its full-year 2022 earnings decreased 16.6% to P3.22 billion from P3.86 billion a year earlier, citing higher prices of fuel and energy. Gross revenues slipped 4.4% to P17.68 billion from P18.5 billion.

On Thursday, shares of Atlas Mining dropped 13 centavos or 2.97% to close at P4.25 each. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

## GrabFood sees more transactions, targets sustained growth

ONLINE food delivery service GrabFood has seen more consumer transactions and is targeting to sustain its growth, according to its official.

Greg Camacho, Grab Philippines director for deliveries, told reporters in Taguig City on Thursday that GrabFood consumers ordered 1.7 times more in 2022 compared with 2019 levels. GrabFood is the food delivery service of Grab Philippines superapp.

"We've seen GrabFood transactions grow 1.7 times so it really means that people are just ordering and doing more transactions in general," Mr. Camacho said.

"Our goal is to keep growing the number of transactions, which is why we are looking for more touchpoints for consumers," he added.

Mr. Camacho also said that the average basket sizes of customers using GrabFood increased 84% in 2023 compared with pre-

pandemic levels, signaling higher consumer spending.

"The exciting thing about that is people are not doing just transactions, but they are actually spending more per transaction," Mr. Camacho said.

"More than 50% of transactions on Grab are coming from families. Almost 75% of transactions are for more than one person. That means the basket size will be higher than really just ordering for yourself," he added.

Mr. Camacho also disclosed that deliveries are seen to remain despite the reopening of the economy, but said that GrabFood is still searching for other opportunities such as the dine-in market.

"If you look at the behavior of deliveries... it's still here. It's here to stay," Mr. Camacho said.

"We're trying to tap the dine-in market with self-pick-up with scan-to-order. I think

through that way, what we see is continued growth, through offering different touchpoints for our consumers," he added.

Scan-to-order is a dine-in solution that allows consumers to order and pay for dine-in via the Grab app while self-pickup allows consumers to order ahead and claim their orders from merchants.

Meanwhile, Mr. Camacho said that GrabFood recently launched in Cabanatuan and is eyeing to sustain its strong presence in areas outside of Metro Manila such as Cebu, Davao, Bacolod, and Iloilo.

He added that GrabFood is set to launch its services in Tagbilaran City as part of its expansion efforts.

"It is not just the main city centers. We're really looking for cities that have a potential to be a good delivery city," Mr. Camacho said. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

## Globe, Smart still keen on longer SIM deadline

TWO public telecommunication entities (PTEs) reiterated their call for the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) to extend the deadline for subscriber identity module (SIM) registration.

"Globe reiterated its call for the DICT to extend the deadline so customers can obtain valid IDs — a key requirement for SIM registration that many SIM users lack, preventing them from completing registration," Globe Telecom, Inc. said in a press release on Thursday.

"Pending response to our appeal for the government to extend the deadline, we call on all Globe SIM users to comply with the law," Globe President and Chief Executive Officer Ernest L. Cu said.

"Extending the deadline will give our remaining 45% subscriber base ample time to register. At present, all 160-million subscribers in the country are given only 121 days to register," Smart Communications, Inc. First Vice-President and Group Head for Corporate Communications Catherine Y. Yang said in a separate press release.

"Comparatively, in other countries like Indonesia and India, PTEs were given 1 to 2 years of a registration window to better prepare for and promote SIM registration," she added.

On Wednesday, the DICT posted a statement that rejected the appeal of the three PTEs for the extension of SIM registration.

As of April 18, the DICT recorded a total of 74.18 million registered SIMs which is 44.15% of the 168.98-million subscribers nationwide have registered.

Of the total SIMs registered, 36.56 million are Smart subscribers, 32.22 million are from Globe, while DITO Telecommunity Corp. recorded 5.4 million.

Meanwhile, Albay Representative Jose Ma. Clemente S. Salceda said that the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) and the National Privacy Commission (NPC) should ensure that all data collected under the SIM Registration Law should be well-guarded and secure.

"SIM Card registries will be the largest source of personal data in the country. So, they will be targets. I call on the NTC and the NPC to make the necessary reviews and proactive measures to ensure that a similar data breach will not take place in SIM registries," Mr. Salceda said.

"That probably means a periodic audit of privacy protocols of telecommunications companies by the NPC. And that has to be sooner rather than later," he added.

The statement came after a report posted on vpnMentor on Tuesday by cybersecurity researcher Jeremiah Fowler said more than 1.2-million police records and 800 gigabytes of information on people who work or applied for employment in law enforcement in the Philippines were publicly available on a database. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**