

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) 6,529.99 ▲ 30.31 PTS. ▲ 0.46%

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PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P667.50 +P17.50 +2.69%	ACEN ACEN Corp. P6.12 ---	AEV Abolitz Equity Ventures, Inc. P52.70 +P4.30 +8.88%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P12.36 ---	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P27.40 +P0.90 +3.4%	AP Abolitz Power Corp. P36.90 -P0.30 -0.81%	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P128.20 -P0.30 -0.23%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P102.00 -P0.50 -0.49%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P12.58 -P0.22 -1.72%	DMC DMCI Holdings, Inc. P11.32 -P0.18 -1.57%
EMI Emperador, Inc. P20.90 ---	GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,825.00 -P39.00 -2.09%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P502.00 -P14.00 -2.71%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P213.60 +P0.20 +0.09%	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P226.00 +P2.00 +0.89%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P51.00 +P3.10 +6.47%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P9.90 ---	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P58.60 +P0.10 +0.17%	MER Manila Electric Co. P309.60 -P1.40 -0.45%	MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P9.00 -P0.81 -8.26%
MPI Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P3.71 +P0.03 +0.82%	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P32.70 +P1.40 +4.47%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P32.60 +P0.25 +0.77%	SM SM Investments Corp. P885.00 -P4.00 -0.45%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P107.80 +P0.80 +0.75%	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P32.95 +P0.15 +0.46%	TEL PLDT Inc. P1,337.00 -P83.00 -5.85%	UBP Union Bank of the Philippines P85.05 ---	URC Universal Robina Corp. P145.00 +P1.00 +0.69%	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P29.30 -P0.70 -2.33%

MacroAsia turns profitable with P446-M net income

LISTED aviation-support provider MacroAsia Corp. recorded P446.08 million in attributable net income last year, turning around from a net loss of P2.16 million a year earlier, as revenues more than doubled with the easing of travel restrictions. "Due to less-restrictive measures of the country and other governments in the region, travel and tourism in 2022 saw a re-

bound," the company said in a disclosure on Monday. In 2022, the company's revenues reached P4.88 billion, up by 2.5 times the P1.95 billion in 2021. "MacroAsia saw domestic travel volumes in 2022 climb to pre-pandemic levels, with international travel trailing closer to 2019 pre-pandemic level," the Lucio C. Tan-led company said, citing the easing of restrictions worldwide.

Revenues from in-flight and other catering accounted for P2.29 billion of revenues in 2022, almost three times the P592.16 million in 2021, the company's financial statement shows. Revenues from ground handling and aviation reached P2.05 billion, a 95% jump from the P1.05 billion booked in 2021. During the pandemic, MacroAsia saw its airport-related busi-

nesses greatly affected by travel restrictions, prompting it to adjust its strategy by growing other businesses not related to aviation. "Thus, 24% of the topline for MacroAsia in 2022 now comes from non-airline-related activities," the company said. In 2022, revenues from water distribution reached P515 million, up by 85.8% from P277.19 million in 2021.

Meanwhile, administrative fees generated revenues of P30.44 million, up by 4.5% from P29.12 million. A portion of the company's catering revenues came from its commissary in Muntinlupa City, which it said became a "significant revenue pillar" for its food group. For 2023, MacroAsia expects to be on track for revenue growth as the aviation business recovers

and as it continues to expand its non-airline-related business. "The momentum for MacroAsia's revenue growth in 2023 is apparent, as the aviation services industry tracks towards strong recovery while the non-airline businesses of the group continue to expand," it said. On Monday, shares in MacroAsia closed unchanged at P4.88 apiece. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

ACEN outlines net zero target, reaffirms aim for full renewables

AYALA-LED ACEN Corp. has reaffirmed its commitment to transition the company's power generation portfolio to 100% renewable energy by 2025. In a media release on Monday, ACEN outlined its "robust net zero roadmap" that includes the company's target for near-term and long-term emission reductions. "We are pleased to share our progress on our commitment to achieve Net Zero GHG (greenhouse gas) emissions by 2050, including reaching our long-term decarbonization goals by 2040, with clear milestones providing an accountable and transparent framework for measuring

progress," said Eric T. Francia, president and chief executive officer of ACEN. The energy company said that it is important to cut GHG emissions to as close as zero or to reach a net zero target for the power sector. "ACEN is the first energy company in Southeast Asia to take this critical step towards achieving net zero, providing an accountable and transparent framework for monitoring progress," the company said. ACEN said that it targets to achieve its near-term emission reduction by 2030, deliver its long-term emission reduction targets by 2040, and neutralize residual emissions to achieve net zero by 2050.

"This 2050 goal is in line with the broader Ayala group net zero target, while ACEN will continue to explore opportunities to further accelerate these targets in future," ACEN said. The company is targeting to reach 20 gigawatts of renewable capacity by 2030. To date, it has 4,000 megawatts of attributable capacity spread across the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, and Australia. In November last year, ACEN completed the full divestment of its South Luzon Thermal Energy Corp. stake through an energy transition mechanism, or a scheme that funds the transition from coal to renewables.

The move allowed the early retirement of the coal plant in Batangas, bringing the company closer to its target of 100% renewable energy generation by 2025. "To fight climate change, the world has to meet the ultimate goal of reaching Net Zero emissions by 2050. To get there, carbon dioxide emissions from the power sector need to shrink by approximately 60% between 2019 and 2030," ACEN said. At the local bourse on Monday, shares in the company closed unchanged at P6.12 apiece. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

Apex Mining posts P3-B income on higher gold sales

APEX Mining Co., Inc. reported on Monday a consolidated net income of P3.34 billion in 2022, five times more than the previous year's level, as higher gold sales and prices boosted revenues. "The consolidated revenues and net income are an all-time high for Apex Mining," the company said in a disclosure. In 2021, the listed mining company recorded P657.25 million in consolidated net income, a decline from P1.53 billion in 2020. Last year, consolidated revenues jumped by 39% to P10.31 billion from the P7.4 billion reported in the previous year. Gold revenues reached P9.85 billion, higher by 41.3% than the P6.97 billion posted a year earlier. Silver revenues stood at P455.81 million, up 4.6% from P435.8 million previously. According to Apex Mining, the total volume of gold sales was up by 28% to 101,096 ounces while silver sales were up by 6% to 382,345 ounces. Realized prices for gold inched up by 1% to \$1,797 per ounce while realized prices for silver fell by 11% to \$21.78 per ounce. "The expansion plans that were rolled out in 2022 generated the desired efficiencies," the company said. The Maco gold mine in Maco, Davao De Oro, increased its milling capacity by 11% to 250 tons per day, which brought its daily average to 2,300 tons. Total tonnage milled was higher by 15% year on year to 815,910 tons. Gold output was higher by 23% to 91,072 ounces, while silver output was up by 5% to 377,729 ounces. Sangilo, the operating mine of Apex Mining's subsidiary Ilogon-Suyoc Resources, Inc., also increased its milling capacity by 100% to 200 tons per day. "ISRI milled a total of 131,481 tonnes in 2022 and produced 9,270 [ounces] of gold and 629 [ounces] of silver," it said. For 2022, the consolidated production jumped by 28% to P5.43 billion from P4.3 billion in the previous year. The company's milling throughput increased by 15% to 815,910 tons from 708,447 tons in 2021. Of the total increase, the cost of materials and supplies only accounted for 12%. This was followed by depreciation and depletion costs (6%); personnel cost (3%); and repairs and maintenance (2%). Apex Mining is primarily engaged in mining, milling, buying, and selling all kinds of ores including gold, silver, and copper. On Monday, shares of Apex Mining at the stock exchange fell by P0.01 or 0.47% to close at P2.12 apiece. — **Shelden Joy Talavera**

PAL expects 20% rise in Holy Week arrivals

FLAG carrier Philippine Airlines (PAL) said on Monday that it is expecting up to a 20% increase in the number of its passengers arriving at Terminals 1 and 2 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport. "Normally, the arrival level at Terminal 2 is at 18,000 daily, and then 6,700 arrivals in Terminal 1. So, we are expecting a 15% to 20% increase because that is the pegged increase during the pre-pandemic," PAL Spokesperson Cielo C. Villaluna said in the Laging Handa briefing. Ms. Villaluna said the airline is expecting to reach the pre-pandemic arrival level during the Holy Week, citing passengers' revenge travel. "With the revenge travel, we are hoping that we can have the same level or even more because this is the first Holy Week after the pandemic period that the travel borders are finally opened and there is easing of travel restrictions," she added. This Holy Week, PAL will allow passengers to check in as early as six hours before their flight from the previous three hours. "This would create a spread in terms of the volume of passengers utilizing the check-in counters. So *imbex na lahat* three hours *nagkukumpuni sa* check-in counters, *ngayon naka*-spread within a five- to six-hour period (So instead of everyone going to check-in counters within three hours, now it will be spread within a five- to six-hour period)," Ms. Villaluna said. At present, the airline has been operating 92% of its pre-pandemic number of flights, she said. "Pre-pandemic, we are operating an average of 300 flight legs, and we are currently operating 92% of pre-pandemic level," she said. In 2022, PAL reported an operating income of \$297.2 million and a total comprehensive income of \$196.9 million. Its first positive bottom line since 2019 was supported by consolidated

revenues of \$2.57 billion in 2022, more than two times the \$1.21 billion in 2021. "We have registered positive income for all four quarters of 2022, and this is a continuing profit-taking streak from our performance in 2021," Ms. Villaluna said. "We attribute the positive performance to the support of our stakeholders, the support of the flying public, the support of the Philippine government, and the support of creditors, stakeholders and employees of PAL," she added. In 2022, PAL flights achieved an average passenger load factor of 72%, higher than the 42.6% load factor it recorded in 2021. The flag carrier's total number of passengers in 2022 reached 9.2 million, which it said increased by 214% or more than three times 2021's around 2.92 million. Analysts said the airline benefited from revenge travel as restrictions worldwide ease. "PAL's operating income was up on revenge travel as global travel restrictions ease, enabling a more than doubling of carriage level plus the benefit of restructured debt," First Metro Investment Corp. Head of Research Cristina S. Ulang said in a Viber message. "Consistent with overall trends in the airline industry, PAL itself recognized its first positive full-year operating income since the pandemic as global air travel continued to improve with the easing of covid restrictions," Regina Capital Development Corp. Head of Sales Luis A. Limlingan said in a Viber message. First Grade Finance, Inc. Managing Director Astro C. del Castillo said the airline also benefited from the demand for business travel. "Just like any other industry, it's benefiting from the more open economy as things are getting back to normal. PAL is benefiting from the demand to travel not only for leisure but also for business," Mr. del Castillo added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

BBK bibingka and coffee brand targets at least 100 new stores

THE BBK Group is planning an aggressive expansion for its BBK *bibingka* or baked rice cake and coffee brand as it aims to open at least 100 new stores this year, according to its top official. "We're very aggressive this year. Of course, being in a pandemic, the planned expansion was put on hold. So, this year, we're opening at least 100 stores for the BBK (*bibingka* and coffee) brand. It's very conservative," BBK Group Founding Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Richard V. Sanz said during an interview on the sidelines of a recent press conference in Quezon City. "The focus of our expansion is having bigger stores and having a better store experience. We're targeting about 100 more stores," he added. BBK *bibingka* and coffee currently has 280 stores. If the expansion plan is realized, it would bring the total number of branches to 380 stores, Mr. Sanz said.

BBK's planned expansion would be focused on areas outside Metro Manila, he said, adding that the ratio is typically 50% owned by the BBK Group and 50% owned by franchisees. "We're opening [a branch in] SM Bataan in May. We are opening [in] San Pedro, Laguna. We are also opening in Tagaytay," Mr. Sanz said. "Our strategy is still anchored on being in the malls." Although BBK has seen "huge success" in malls, there is also a trend among stores to open branches outside of them, he said. "That's what we're also exploring. I think a big chunk of the new stores we're opening will also be independent stores," Mr. Sanz said, citing al fresco dining and parks, and even some stores with a drive-through. He said BBK's expansion is driven by surging demand and the shift of employees to a work-from-home (WFH) arrangement. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**



Inchcape takeover of CATS Group controlling stake remains on track

THE move by British automotive distributor Inchcape Plc to acquire the controlling stake in local luxury vehicle distributor CATS Group of Companies is on track for completion within the first semester, according to an official of the local firm. "That still is on track. As of now, [we still expect] early second half of the year. We complete in the first half and then we start anew with the joint venture in the second half of the year," CATS Chief Operating Officer Francis Jonathan C. Ang told *BusinessWorld* on the sidelines of the 2023 Jeep Grand Cherokee L launch in Taguig City last week when asked for an update on the acquisition. "As far as the public, our customers, are concerned, there would be no difference [in the operations]," he added. In January, Inchcape and CATS agreed to enter into a joint venture. Under the agreement, Inchcape will take a 60% controlling stake in CATS as the foreign group expands its global footprint. The founding Ang family will retain the remaining 40% of the company. Aside from expanding its offering, CATS is also expected to use Inchcape's digital and data expertise to

improve its operations. The acquisition is estimated to add 120 million pounds to Inchcape's revenues. "After over 30 successful years of operating independently, we believe the time is now right for CATS to take the next step in our growth journey," CATS Founder Felix R. Ang said in January. "In Inchcape, we have found the right partner to drive us forward." Founded in 1989, CATS is the local distributor for various luxury vehicle brands like Mercedes-Benz, Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge, Ram, Jaguar, and Land Rover. The group also has dealerships for Mazda and Harley-Davidson motorcycles. Inchcape is a global automotive distributor that carries brands such as Toyota, Subaru, Suzuki, Jaguar Land Rover, BMW, Chevrolet, Great Wall Motor, Peugeot Citroen, Harley-Davidson, Daimler, Hino, and other commercial vehicle partners. Inchcape has a presence in Australia, Brunei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Guam, Macau, New Zealand, Saipan, Singapore, and Thailand. The company's headquarters in the Asia-Pacific region is in Singapore. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

ERRATUM

IN the Upton story that came out on Monday on this page, the issue manager was erroneously identified as another entity instead of First Metro Investment Corp. Our apologies for the confusion that the error may have caused.