

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) 6,620.83 ▼43.72 PTS. ▼0.65% MONDAY, MAY 22, 2023 **BusinessWorld**

PSEI MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P692.00 -P2.00 -0.29%	ACEN ACEN Corp. P6.21 +P0.06 +0.98%	AEV Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P55.35 -P0.25 -0.45%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P13.50 -P0.12 -0.88%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P26.50 -P0.60 -2.21%	AP Aboitiz Power Corp. P38.00 +P0.05 +0.13%	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P139.00 -P1.00 -0.71%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P102.90 -P2.60 -2.46%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P11.20 -P0.10 -0.88%	DMC DMCI Holdings, Inc. P9.88 +P0.03 +0.3%
EMI Emperador, Inc. P21.15 -P0.05 -0.24%	GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,720.00 -P20.00 -1.15%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P507.00 -P2.50 -0.49%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P201.00 ---	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P231.60 -P1.00 -0.43%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P50.10 -P0.55 -1.09%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P9.97 +P0.02 +0.2%	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P59.50 ---	MER Manila Electric Co. P329.00 +P0.60 +0.18%	MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P8.60 -P0.26 -2.93%
MPI Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P4.47 ---	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P31.85 +P0.10 +0.31%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P29.05 +P0.05 +0.17%	SM SM Investments Corp. P924.00 -P5.00 -0.54%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P105.40 +P1.30 +1.25%	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P34.00 -P0.05 -0.15%	TEL PLDT Inc. P1,285.00 -P8.00 -0.62%	UBP Union Bank of the Philippines P80.00 +P0.10 +0.13%	URC Universal Robina Corp. P146.00 -P2.50 -1.68%	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P27.30 -P0.05 -0.18%

House of Investments sells more shares in EEI

THE BOARD of directors of Yuchengco-led House of Investments, Inc. has approved the sale of 14.346% of EEI Corp.'s common shares to Industry Holdings and Development Corp. (IHDC). "IHDC's entry as a strategic partner is deemed beneficial to EEI's growth plans and restructuring efforts," the listed holding firm said in a regulatory filing on Monday. "Aside from having a partner that will improve the performance of EEI, the proceeds will be used to increase the capitalization of a subsidiary by subscri-

ing to preferred shares in ATYC, Inc.," it added. The company said the move is part of efforts to review its business interests and to consolidate other businesses from the Yuchengco group of companies into House of Investments. Its board approved the block sale of 148.66-million common shares at P7.23 each for about P1.08 billion. The transaction comes after the company announced the sale of its 20% stake in EEI to the Romualdez family-led firm RYM Business Management Corp. for

P1.25 billion at P6.03 each of the 207.26 million common shares. As a result of both sell-downs, the Yuchengcos will now own about 20.9% of EEI, which will remain as a portfolio investment of the company. EEI is one of the largest construction and contracting firms in the Philippines. IHDC is owned by a group headed by Francis Chua, a construction engineer with established business interests in construction supply including pre-cast concrete structures, cement and aggregates, as well as

investments in the logistics and real estate sectors. Its subsidiaries include Concrete Stone Corp., which primarily manufactures pre-cast concrete and trades cement products and aggregates, and Industry Movers Corp., a company engaged in freight handling and multiple vessel operations. To date, no agreement between the two companies has been signed. Meanwhile, House of Investment's board approved the acquisition of preferred shares

in its wholly owned subsidiary ATYC amounting to P1 billion in exchange for 10 million preferred shares priced at P100 apiece. The firm said that the additional investment will be used to pay the loans of ATYC, which was incorporated in 2022 and owns the A.T. Yuchengco Centre in BGC, Taguig. "This will reduce interest payment and exposure to market risk," it added. Also on Monday, House of Investments reported an attributed net loss of P8.02 million in the

first quarter of the year, a reversal of its P373.88-million net income a year earlier. It incurred a quarterly loss despite revenues growing 27.1% to P6.71 billion from P5.28 billion in the same period last year. General and administrative expenses increased during the first quarter, along with interest and finance charges. On Monday, House of Investment shares fell by 2.1% or P0.10 to close at P4.66 apiece. EEI shares declined by 1.67% or P0.10 to P5.90 each. — **Adrian H. Halili**

MJCI to convert P2.43-B shareholder deposits to equity

MJC INVESTMENTS Corp. (MJCI) intends to convert into equity about P2.43 billion in deposits from shareholders to move its owners' equity into positive territory. In a regulatory filing, the company said the conversion of the deposits from noncurrent liabilities into equity "would be more than sufficient to cure its negative equity position," which it said stood at P1.53 billion as of Sept. 20, 2022. It said the deposits to be converted came from a consortium of Hong Kong-based strategic investors and other

shareholders, which amount to P2.11 billion. Around P321.23 million came from Manila Jockey Club, Inc. MJCI intends to issue the corresponding shares from its authorized capital stocks at a subscription price based on either a discount to the 60-day volume-weighted average price (VWAP) or a premium over its 30-day VWAP per share. The share price will be approved by the company's board of directors during a special meeting in the first week of July and may be presented to shareholders at its annual meeting in September.

The subscription price will be offset against the deposits of the participating stockholders. The company will execute the subscription agreement with participating stockholders within five trading days from the date of its special board meeting. In a notice last week, the Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc. (PSE) suspended the trading of MJCI for non-filing its annual report for 2022. "Pursuant to Article VII, Section 17.8 on Sanctions for Non-Compliance with Certain Structured Reportorial

Requirements under the Consolidated Listing and Disclosure Rules of the Exchange, the failure of [MJCI] with reportorial requirements will merit the imposition of a trading suspension of its shares starting on May 18," the PSE said. MJCI is the property development arm of racetrack operator Manila Jockey Club. The latter started as a racetrack operator for horse racing and eventually expanded into real estate. The company owns and operates the Winford Hotel and Casino within the San Lazaro Tourism and Business Park in Sta. Cruz, Manila. — **Adrian H. Halili**

Shares in Century Pacific Food sold for around P2.8B

CENTURY PACIFIC FOOD, INC. said its majority shareholder had approved the sale of shares equivalent to a 3% stake in the listed food products maker via a private placement. In a regulatory filing on Monday, the company said the shares were sold at a price of P26.60 apiece for a total of about P2.8 billion. The sale proceeds will be settled three trading days after the crossing of the shares. Century Pacific Food said the shares to be sold in the secondary block trade are all owned by Century Pacific Group, Inc. (CPG), and will not dilute the shareholdings of existing public investors. "We are seeing opportunities at the holding company level and will be deploying proceeds across various investments," said CPG Chairman Christopher T. Po.

Century Pacific Food said the transaction is expected to increase its public float to 34% from 31%, which could improve "trading liquidity and allow for greater investor participation in the stock." Mr. Po said that after the transaction, CPG will continue to hold a majority stake in Century Pacific Food with 66% and that any sale of shares is not expected "for the foreseeable future." Century Pacific Food said the transaction was oversubscribed, "anchored by high-quality long-only international and domestic institutional investors." It added that the 114 million shares sold were priced "at a tight discount" of 5.2% to their last closing price. On Monday, shares in the company fell by 3.66% or P0.95 to close at P25 each.

Taiwan carrier to launch new Taipei-Clark route in August

TAIWAN'S STARLUX Airlines is launching a route between Taipei and Clark in August this year that will become its third destination in the Philippines. "The Taipei-Clark route is expected to increase STARLUX's competitiveness in the North American transit market, by significantly reducing traffic time for passengers heading to the northern Philippines," the airline said. The airline will operate an Airbus A321neo on the flight from Taipei to Clark that has a two-class layout, with eight seats in business class and 180 seats in economy class.

The flights will operate daily starting on Aug. 15 with flight numbers JK789 and JK790 on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Sundays, and flights JK791 and JK792 for Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays. STARLUX said the flight will be able to attract more business travelers seeking luxury and comfort to the special commercial zone in the Philippines. "[Clark] has become an important economic center in recent years featuring numerous tourist attractions, including the largest water park in Southeast Asia, luxurious golf courses, and casinos. [It] is a

destination that appeals to both business and leisure travelers," it said. The airline currently flies to 17 destinations which are: Los Angeles, Tokyo, Osaka, Fukuoka, Okinawa, Sapporo, Sendai, Macau, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Singapore, Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, Hanoi, Manila, and Cebu. It has a growing fleet which is now composed of 20 aircraft: 13 A321neos, four A330neos, and three A350s. STARLUX expects the delivery of its fourth A350 by the end of the year. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Upson optimistic to sustain growth momentum throughout 2023

Upson International Corp. ("Upson"), a newly listed firm and the country's leading retailer of personal computers (PCs) and information technology (IT) products, remains committed to its aggressive branch roll out plan. For the first quarter this 2023, the company's sales revenues grew by 14.17 percent to P2.4 billion from the P2.09 billion revenues registered during the same period last year. The company's net income at P112.62 million was a 2.18% improvement from a net income of P110.21 million during the same period last year. "The start-up costs and other operational priorities associated with the branch roll out will easily translate to revenue improvements. The resulting improvements in profit margins per newly set up branch become more evident after a year," says Upson President and CEO Ms. Arlene Sy. For operational updates, Upson had 211 branches by the end of the first quarter. There are presently 212

branches as of this writing while a total of 24 additional branches are currently under construction or in process of lease contract finalization. The operational goal is to have a total of 250 branches by year end of 2023. This is consistent with Upson's five year roll-out plan which aims to have a total of 450 operating branches by end of 2027. "We remain confident that our growth momentum will continue throughout the year as we strive to further enhance our market presence to more underserved markets and deliver value to our customers," Sy added. 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, Octagon Mobile and Silvertec in select locations. Last April 3 2023, Upson debuted at the Philippine Stock Exchange, raising P1.65 billion via initial public offering (IPO).

Epson claims market lead in ASEAN for its printers

JAPANESE electronics company Epson said it had cornered the top spot in the large format printing market across the Southeast Asian region last year on the back of surging demand. "As graphic demand increases post-pandemic, Epson continues to see growing opportunities across the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region," Epson said in a statement on Monday. Epson said it had secured a 10% market share for large format printers with solvent, eco-solvent, and latex ink. It also had a 43% market share for textile large-format printers, and a 19% market share for large-format graphic printers, all within the ASEAN region. It cited figures from the International Data Corp. (IDC) Worldwide Quarterly Industrial Printer Tracker 2022 Q4. According to Epson, its recent innovations include the latest SureColor SC-F6430/H textile printer, which allows users to print using violet and orange dye sublimation inks. The printer also features Epson's integrated ink pack system that offers a 45% increase in ink capacity versus its predecessors. The company also has SureColor SC-V7000 UV Flatbed Signage Printer, which uses GreenGuard Gold certified UV inks that allows quality print on materials such as wood, metal, and glass. "Here at Epson, we are continuously innovating to provide solutions to meet our users' every need," Epson Southeast Asia Regional Director of Commercial and Industrial Products Tomohito Morikawa said. "The proprietary technology built into our large format printers exemplifies our commitment to printing excellence, enabling our products to meet the demands of our customers in a vast array of printing requirements and environments," he added. Epson established its presence in the Philippines in 1998. It now has 77 authorized service centers, more than 200 dealers, and at least 800 shops across the country. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Cirtek income slips

CIRTEK HOLDINGS Philippines Corp. posted an 11.3% decline in its attributable net income to \$1.57 million in the first quarter from \$1.77 million last year. The decline came about after it recorded a 13.4% decrease in its top line to \$17.1 million in the first three months, from the \$19.76 million it booked in the same period in 2022. "The decrease accounted for was mainly due to the decrease in revenue from radio wave, microwave, millimeter wave (RF/MW/mmW) and semiconductor business," the company said. Revenues from RF/MW/mmW and antenna manufacturing business amounted to \$2 million, a 61% decline from the \$55 million a year ago. The semiconductor business accounted for \$8.8 million, a 17% decrease from \$10.64 million. Revenues from the Quintel group, which makes antenna solutions for wireless cellular networks, grew 55% to \$6.3 million from \$4.1 million previously. Meanwhile, the cost of sales amounted to \$12.42 million, down 10.8% from \$13.93 million in the previous year. The decrease was mainly due to lower prices of raw materials, a decrease in depreciation and amortization, lower salaries, and inward freight and duties. Operating expenses and finance costs were also lower at \$2.65 million and \$450,818, lower by 13.3% and 55% versus last year's showing, respectively. On Monday shares in the company closed unchanged at P2.96 each. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**