Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) 6,512.01 ▲81.43 PTS. ▲1.26%

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PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC	Ayala Corp.	P658.00	+P13.00	+2.02%
ACEN	ACEN Corp.	P5.99	+P0.01	+0.17%
AEV	Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc.	P54.95	+P2.55	+4.87%
AGI	Alliance Global Group, Inc.	P13.70	+P0.32	+2.39%
ALI	Ayala Land, Inc.	P25.95	+P0.10	+0.39%
AP	Aboitiz Power Corp.	P37.35	+P0.15	+0.4%
BDO	BDO Unibank, Inc.	P139.40	+P2.40	+1.75%
BPI	Bank of the Philippine Islands	P100.00	——	
CNVRG	Converge ICT Solutions, Inc.	P10.70	——	
DMC	DMCI Holdings, Inc.	P9.65	+P0.05	+0.52%
EMI	Emperador, Inc.	P21.00	-P0.15	-0.71%
GLO	Globe Telecom, Inc.	P1,710.00	+P10.00	+0.59%
GTCAP	GT Capital Holdings, Inc.	P510.00	——	
ICT	International Container Terminal Services, Inc.	P202.80	+P1.80	+0.9%
JFC	Jollibee Foods Corp.	P235.00	+P4.60	+2%
JGS	JG Summit Holdings, Inc.	P48.70	+P0.70	+1.46%
LTG	LT Group, Inc.	P9.50	+P0.09	+0.96%
MBT	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	P58.75	+P2.25	+3.98%
MER	Manila Electric Co.	P328.00	+P5.40	+1.67%
MONDE	Monde Nissin Corp.	P7.85	-P0.13	-1.63%
MPI	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	P4.35	-P0.02	-0.46%
PGOLD	Puregold Price Club, Inc.	P30.65	+P0.40	+1.32%
SCC	Semirara Mining and Power Corp.	P28.10	-P0.10	-0.35%
SM	SM Investments Corp.	P920.00	+P10.00	+1.1%
SMC	San Miguel Corp.	P106.90	+P0.20	+0.19%
SMPH	SM Prime Holdings, Inc.	P32.85	+P0.35	+1.08%
TEL	PLDT Inc.	P1,255.00	+P46.00	+3.8%
UBP	Union Bank of the Philippines	P78.20	-P0.60	-0.76%
URC	Universal Robina Corp.	P142.00	+P1.50	+1.07%
WLCON	Wilcon Depot, Inc.	P27.00	——	

ACEN set to expand battery system in Australia

ACEN Corp. has secured approval from the government of New South Wales to increase the capacity of its battery energy storage system in Australia.

In a statement on Sunday, the Ayala-led energy company said the facility's capacity will be increased to 2,800 megawatt-hours (MW) or 1,400 MW per two hours from the initial 200 MW per two hours.

"The New England Solar battery storage can charge using excess power generated from solar and wind, and discharge that energy when required," Anton Rohner, chief executive officer of ACEN Australia, said.

The higher storage capacity will allow the project to increase its energy potential, which can generate power to supply about 175,000 households.

Mr. Rohner said the additional storage will help provide "reliable, cheaper and greener" energy generation for New South Wales.

"We look forward to continuing to work together to decarbonize New South Wales and Australia at large," said Patrice R. Clausse, chief operating officer for ACEN International, as he thanked the foreign government "for their continuing support for our projects."

ACEN's 720-MW-alternating current (MWac) New England battery storage is being constructed in two phases. The first stage, which involves a 400-MWac or 521-megawatt direct current (MWdc), was opened in March this year.

ACEN said because of the approval of the proposed expansion, planning for the project's second phase has stepped closer to construction.

"The modification also includes some changes to Stage 2 of the solar project area, helping to optimize the project, and move it another step towards construction," ACEN said.

The approval of the proposed additional storage capacity comes after the company's Australian unit secured a 20-year long-term energy service agreement for the New England solar project.

ACEN said the nod was part of the New South Wales government's first renewable energy and storage auction, which it said offers an option "to access a minimum price for generation projects."

The company has more than 1 gigawatt (GW) capacity in construction and at least 8 GW capacity being developed in Australia.

Across Australia, its renewable energy projects include solar, wind, pumped hydro, and energy storage. Its first operational project will be the New England solar facility, which it started building in 2021.

"ACEN Australia has also made significant financial commitments to support community initiatives, regional manufacturing and employment, and Indigenous participation in its projects," the company said.

In all, it aims to install 20 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030. It currently has about 4,200 MW of attributable capacity from its facilities in the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, India, and Australia.

ACEN has said that it is committed to transitioning its power generation portfolio to fully renewable energy by 2025 and to becoming a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions company by 2050. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

BlueFloat: Offshore wind to bring PHL energy security

GLOBAL offshore wind developer BlueFloat Energy said accelerating the development of the vast wind energy resources in the Philippines will help hasten the country's energy security ambition.

"We are thrilled to bring BlueFloat Energy's expertise and experience in offshore wind energy to the Philippines. We believe that by tapping into the country's vast clean energy potential, we can make a significant contribution towards reducing carbon emissions and fostering a sustainable future for generations to come," Carlos Martin, chief executive officer of BlueFloat Energy, said in a media briefing on Friday.

Headquartered in Spain, the company said that it had secured four wind energy service contracts in four sites in the Philippines, namely: Central Luzon, Northern Luzon, Southern Luzon, and Southern Mindoro.

The four service contracts have a combined potential capacity of 7.6 gigawatts (GW) or 7,600 megawatts (MW), with each project having an estimated capacity of about 1.5 GW to 3.5 GW.

Mr. Martin said the projects require an estimated investment cost of between $3 million and $5 million per MW at current prices.

Pierre-Antoine Tetard, vice-president for business development of BlueFloat Energy, said the projects will not be developed simultaneously but the estimated timeline for the execution phase and operations of at least one of four projects will be by the end of the decade.

Meanwhile, Mr. Martin said that while they acknowledge the country's wind energy potential, the development of the grid is also needed to integrate additional renewable energy capacity.

"It is never easy [to address grid integration]. First of all, offshore wind is probably easier to integrate. Production is more stable and predictable, you can produce more power," Mr. Martin said.

In May, the Department of Energy issued implementing guidelines for Executive Order 21, which will adopt a whole-of-government approach to expedite the processing of permits and requirements for offshore wind energy projects.

Last month, the department said it had awarded 65 offshore wind contracts with a combined potential capacity of 51.23 GW, which it deemed enough to supply the country's future energy demand.

Under the Philippine Offshore Wind Roadmap, the Philippines has an estimated potential capacity of 178 GW from offshore wind resources. This is expected to help the country reach its aim of increasing the share of renewables to 35% to the country's energy mix by 2030 and 50% by 2040. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

Maynilad hastens initiatives to hit carbon neutrality

MAYNILAD Water Services, Inc. is ramping up its sustainability initiatives to reach carbon neutrality in the coming years.

"We have already commissioned a 1-megawatt (MW) solar panel in our La Mesa treatment plant. We've already constructed another 1 MW within the compound also. It will be commissioned in the succeeding months," Ronald C. Padua, Maynilad's head of supply operations, told reporters last week.

According to its website, the company is aiming to become climate neutral by 2037.

Mr. Padua said the company is looking at installing solar panels in open spaces within water reservoirs, and gradually shifting its vehicle fleet to electric vehicles (EVs).

Roel S. Espiritu, Maynilad's quality, sustainability and resiliency head, said the company is aiming to fully transition to EVs by 2037. At least half of its vehicles are now EVs.

"We are also very aggressive with reforestation," Mr. Espiritu said.

"We are particularly looking at Ipo for reforestation [and] carbon sequestration," he said, referring to the reservoir from which the company sources raw water for treatment.

Maynilad serves Manila, except some portions it, as well as Quezon City, Makati, Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas, and Malabon. It also serves Cavite areas.

Metro Pacific Investments Corp., which has a majority stake in Maynilad, is one of three Philippine units of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd., the others being Philex Mining Corp. and PLDT Inc. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

AppleOne considers expansion outside Cebu

PROPERTY DEVELOPER AppleOne Properties, Inc. is looking at growing outside its base in Cebu province as it is keeping a positive outlook for developments in Visayas and Mindanao areas.

"At this point, we are unable to disclose upcoming developments, but AppleOne group is working on expanding and growing our portfolio both in and outside Cebu," AppleOne President and Chief Executive Officer Ray Go Manigsaca told *BusinessWorld* last week.

"We are taking advantage of the demand for hospitality, commercial, residential, and mixed-use properties and developments anchored on the positive outlook for growth in the VisMin region," he added.

Mr. Manigsaca said several branded projects are in the company's pipeline, one of which is a branded luxury development in Bohol.

Asked about why the company plans to expand outside Cebu, Mr. Manigsaca said: "AppleOne has quite established its footing in Cebu. With this, our main goal is to really expand and grow AppleOne group's portfolio outside Cebu."

"We are continuously working with partner companies and global brands in bringing developments in and outside Cebu. As we grow and expand, and with the company's wide range of property portfolio, we also aim to bring these developments and enrich the industries in the regions, particularly the VisMin area," he added.

In the short term, the company is focusing on growing its existing portfolio and not looking at venturing into other property segments.

"Right now, we are channeling our energy in growing our portfolio in residential, hospitality, commercial, and mixed-use properties and developments anchored on the positive outlook for growth in the VisMin region," said Mr. Manigsaca.

"Coming off from the pandemic, people are very much eager to travel and we're banking on that in advancing our hotel or resort properties and developments, such as Sheraton and Mahi Center. As we continue to expand, we are also always on the lookout for new opportunities that are aligned with our business strategy and values," he added.

In 2022, the company recorded a 152% sales growth, driven by sales in its The Residence at Sheraton Cebu Mactan Resort.

Meanwhile, the company is interested in doing an initial public offering.

"Entering the equity market is also in the pipeline. AppleOne is still looking into it. But as of now, we are more focused on our upcoming partnerships and projects that bring world-class facilities and properties in the regions," he said.— **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Appellate court denies PAL's P20-M refund

THE Court of Tax Appeals (CTA) has denied Philippine Airlines, Inc.'s (PAL) refund claim totaling P20.06 million representing its excise taxes for importations of liquor, wine, and tobacco for the period covering August 2014 to February 2018.

In a 25-page decision dated May 30 and made public on June 2, the CTA Special First Division said it did not find any illegal excise taxes that were refundable in favor of PAL.

"Petitioner (PAL) failed to present sufficient and convincing evidence to prove that the imported tobacco and alcohol products were not locally available in reasonable quantity, quality, or price, at the time of importation," according to the ruling penned by Associate Justice Catherine T. Manahan, citing Presidential Decree No. 1590, or the law establishing the flag carrier.

The tribunal added the firm failed to provide evidence such as price lists of the said products to show that they were not locally available, which is mandated under law.

Under the law, PAL is exempted from the payment of excise tax on its tobacco and alcohol if the said products are not locally available in a reasonable quantity, quality, or price, and if the said supplies are important for the use of the franchisee in its transport and other incidental operations.

The case stemmed from separate demand letters issued by the Bureau of Customs that sought payment from PAL on imports worth P20.06 million.

In a separate dissenting opinion, Associate Justice Marian Ivy F. Reyes-Fajardo said PAL should be excused from excise tax imposition on its wines and liquors based on the testimony of its manager for in-flight materials purchasing division.

Citing Supreme Court jurisprudence, the magistrate said the manager's declaration that the products were not locally available and the presented price lists from various local suppliers should be enough to grant the refund claim. — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**

OUTLIER

ICTSI rises on US debt discussions, MSCI rebalancing

By Abigail Marie P. Yraola
Researcher

SHARES in Razon-led International Container Terminal Services, Inc. (ICTSI) increased last week on profit taking, driven by the Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI) rebalancing and the suspension of the US debt ceiling.

Data from the Philippine Stock Exchange showed ICTSI ranking ninth in value turnover with P1.45-billion worth of 7.33 million shares exchanging hands from May 29 to June 2.

ICTSI shares closed at P202.80 apiece on Friday, 4% higher than its May 26 close of P195.00. Year to date, the stock has inched up by 1.4%.

Analysts said ICTSI's price movement was mainly driven by MSCI rebalancing and developments in the US debt ceiling.

"We think price action for [ICTSI] this week was heavily influenced by broad-based selling pressure amid tepid trading activity given the overhang from the MSCI rebalancing and US debt ceiling developments," Rastine Mackie D. Mercado, research director at China Bank Securities Corp., said in an e-mail.

The MSCI rebalancing resulted in foreign outflows and worsened selling pressures, he added. The index is designed to measure the performance of the large and mid-cap segments of the Philippine market, covering about 85% of the local equity market. It is reviewed and rebalanced twice a year.

In a Viber message, Aniceto K. Pangan, equity trader at Diversified Securities, Inc., said that aside from the income growth reported in the first quarter, profit taking prevailed in the local market as US debt ceiling negotiations continue and amid uncertainties on whether US Fed policy rates would pause or increase.

The US Senate passed legislation backed by President Joseph R. Biden, Jr. that lifts the government's $31.4 trillion debt ceiling, averting what would have been a first-ever default, Reuters reported.

The Senate voted 63-36 to approve the bill that had been passed last Wednesday by the House of Representatives, as lawmakers raced against the clock following months of partisan bickering between Democrats and Republicans, the report said.

FULL STORY

Read the full story by scanning the QR code or by typing the link
<bit.ly/ICTSI060523>