

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,613.50

▲ 71.59 PTS.

▲ 1.09%

THURSDAY, JULY 20, 2023

BusinessWorld

PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P628.00 +P8.00 +1.29%	ACEN ACEN Corp. P5.40 +P0.03 +0.56%	AEV Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P53.70 +P0.40 +0.75%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P12.50 -P0.12 -0.95%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P27.00 +P0.95 +3.65%	AP Aboitiz Power Corp. P35.10 +P0.30 +0.86%	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P146.30 +P4.60 +3.25%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P114.50 +P1.10 +0.97%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P10.58 +P0.04 +0.38%	DMC DMCI Holdings, Inc. P9.37 -P0.02 -0.21%
EMI Emperador, Inc. P20.95 +P0.05 +0.24%	GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,890.00 +P43.00 +2.33%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P535.50 +P5.50 +1.04%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P206.00 -P1.60 -0.77%	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P258.80 +P3.80 +1.49%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P44.30 -P0.40 -0.89%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P9.60 +P0.04 +0.42%	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P57.25 +P1.25 +2.23%	MER Manila Electric Co. P351.20 +P1.40 +0.4%	MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P8.72 ---
MPI Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P4.92 ---	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P29.70 +P0.20 +0.68%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P28.00 +P0.10 +0.36%	SM SM Investments Corp. P940.00 +P19.00 +2.06%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P106.00 ---	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P33.10 +P0.10 +0.3%	TEL PLDT Inc. P1,300.00 -P6.00 -0.46%	UBP Union Bank of the Philippines P72.50 ---	URC Universal Robina Corp. P131.00 ---	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P24.10 -P0.40 -1.63%

Globe eyes 200,000 prepaid fiber users this year

GLOBE TELECOM, Inc. expects to reach at least 200,000 customers for its prepaid fiber internet by the end of 2023 as the company launched the product on Thursday.

Raymond Policarpio, vice-president for brand management of Globe's broadband business group, told reporters the target is possible as the new product, which offers high-speed internet connection, will be tapping less saturated markets.

"[Prepaid fiber] penetration right now for the Philippines is

geared towards the A, B, and C markets, which are highly saturated at around 78%, but that's just around 30% of the total Philippine households," he said.

"The 70% of the household — the D and E markets — remains to be penetrated at only about 26%. So there's a huge opportunity there," he said.

Mr. Policarpio said the company is expecting to have new entrants to the fiber market, which receives data transmitted via fiber optic cables, after the rollout of its GFiber Prepaid.

"What we are trying to target here is the D and E markets so we will be getting a lot of new entrants to the fiber market. We are aiming to get some acquisitions new to the category," he said.

Globe subscribers can enjoy fiber connectivity through its pay-per-use promos starting from P299 for seven days, and P999 for 30 days.

"The GFiber Prepaid is available nationwide. It is not limited to Metro Manila; we've launched it across the whole country. Customers will just

have to check their serviceability," Mr. Policarpio said.

DATA CENTER JOINT VENTURE

Meanwhile, the joint venture between Globe, the Ayala group, and Singapore-based ST Telemedia Global Data Centres (STT GDC) partnered with three local universities to build a data center talent pool.

In a press release on Thursday, STT GDC Philippines — the joint venture between the Ayala group and STT GDC — said that it has collaborated with the De La

Salle University, the University of Santo Tomas, and the National University.

"This partnership merges the academic expertise of our esteemed university partners with industry insights from STT GDC Philippines, offering an enriched learning journey for students and a fortified future for our nation's digital revolution," said Carlo-magno F. Malana, president and chief executive officer of STT GDC Philippines.

The Globe group said the collaboration will help achieve

three strategic objectives: enhancing awareness of the data center industry, integrating industry-relevant content into engineering curricula, and providing hands-on internship programs.

"Looking forward, STT GDC Philippines plans to scale up the program, inviting more universities and training institutions to participate, to create a robust talent pipeline for the country's data center industry," it added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Blockchain, AI firm ventures in interior designing industry

A BLOCKCHAIN and artificial intelligence (AI)-powered homebuilding platform called Homeqube will be entering the interior construction industry.

Jose Paolo Calma, former chief executive officer of the Multi-Development and Construction Corp. (MDCC), has launched Homeqube, which aims to enable users to design their dream homes through its network of professionals.

MDCC is a multi-design and construction company in the Philippines whose clients include Okada Manila, Shangri-La Boracay, and Novotel Manila Interiors.

"Homeqube is designed to solve persistent problems within the industry, such as longlead times, staggering inefficiencies in the design process, the overreliance on human labor, unsustainable raw materials, and not to mention the huge gap between e-commerce and the sector," Mr. Calma said in a statement on Thursday.

The platform will feature user-centric controls where various combinations can be created from basic system parts. These will allow users to explore cost, lifestyle and mobility metrics, which will help them make informed home design and building decisions.

The platform will also include optical character

recognition, which will allow automatic lot area plotting, agile design and auto-generation of essential documents before move-in.

Homeqube will also have a token and gamification approach, which will allow users to earn tokens every time their created art and design are recognized and accepted by the system.

These designs could be later on sold by the users as non-fungible tokens (NFT) once they become community members.

In turn, the platform will also feature a Solana-based launchpad and NFT marketplace for homebuilding needs, which makes it the first NFT marketplace that accepts a wide array of 3D printing files.

"Drawing on the principles of strategic information architecture and the power of peer collaboration, Homeqube revolutionizes the industry," said Mr. Calma.

"There's no need for traditional e-commerce 'add to cart' processes. With our platform, we introduce an innovative approach where commercial satisfaction can be achieved through engaging and interactive experiences. We're also paving the way for seamless fiat ramping," he added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Mapúa University aims to double enrollment

MAPÚA University targets to double its enrollment count in the coming years in line with the 10-year development plan of Ayala-Yuchengco-led iPeople, Inc., its top official said on Thursday.

"Our target is to continually increase [the number of enrollments]," Mapúa President and Chief Executive Officer Dodjie S. Maestrecampo said in a media briefing. "I think we will have to double or triple the current size of our system."

Mr. Maestrecampo said growth in student numbers would be mainly achieved through the expansion of the school's network or the building of new campuses.

"We are also keen on growing our digital or fully online programs," he added.

Additionally, he said the university will mainly focus on the 10-year development plan earlier implemented by iPeople that aims to increase the number of students and achieve sustainable financing.

iPeople, together with House of Investments, owns and operates its main subsidiary, Malayan Education System, Inc., which operates under the name of Mapúa University.

"We have just started our collaboration, and this is just three or four years after the merger. We crafted a 10-year development plan under the whole iPeople group, and we are focused on achieving those targets," he added.

The company, in 2019, merged with AC Education, Inc., the edu-

cation arm of Ayala Corp., with iPeople as the surviving entity.

The merger resulted in the acquisition of three additional operating subsidiaries: National Teachers College, University of Nueva Caceres, and Affordable Private Education Center, Inc., which is doing business under the name of APEC Schools.

During the first quarter, iPeople reported an attributable net income of P244.73 million, up 25.1% from P195.59 million in the same period last year.

In the three-month period, the company's topline rose by 23% to P1.07 billion from P870.5 million the prior year.

Meanwhile, Mapúa announced the appointment of Mr. Maestrecampo as president

and chief executive, making him the university's fourth president since 1925.

He concurrently serves as president of its higher education units in Laguna and Mindanao, under the Ayala-Yuchengco partnership.

"I am committed to leading Mapúa into a new era of excellence and ensuring our university is where students can thrive, learn, and grow," he said in a statement.

The university said that under Mr. Maestrecampo's tenure, it will continue to introduce more groundbreaking, future-ready programs and courses to enable students to hone global competencies using cutting-edge technologies. — **Adrian H. Halili**

Filinvest to serve 300,000 homes in Cebu via desalination project

FILINVEST Development Corp. (FDC) through its unit is set to operate water desalination and treatment plants in Cebu that could yield water supply for about 300,000 households, the company said on Thursday.

In a stock exchange disclosure, the company said FDC Water Utilities, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of FDC Utilities, Inc. (FDCUI), its power and utilities arm, will manage the desalination plant.

FDC said it had proposed to the Cebu City government to help the area's water supply needs through desalination technology by utilizing its abundant seawater.

"We are committed to support the development and progress of Cebu City by addressing its water supply challenges," said Juan Eugenio L. Roxas, president and chief executive officer of Filinvest Hitachi Omni Waterworks or Flow.

Flow is the joint venture company between FDC and Hitachi Aqua-Tech Engineering, which is a Singapore-based company that provides water solutions specializing in water treatment using the latest technologies to address water problems.

Mr. Roxas said that with Hitachi Aqua-Tech's expertise, the company could provide "long-term solutions" to the water requirements in Cebu by ensuring its water needs are met with adequate supply.

Earlier, FDCUI said that it was planning to build a desalination facility in Cebu with a capacity of about 80 million liters per day (MLD) to address the 300 MLD shortage in Cebu.

At the local bourse on Thursday, shares in FDC gained five centavos or 1.01% to end at P5 apiece. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

Petron redeems nearly \$478-M debt securities

PETRON Corp. has fully redeemed the \$477.53 million in senior perpetual capital securities it issued in 2018, the oil company said on Thursday.

In a regulatory filing, it said that after the redemption, the distribution of the securities will cease to accrue as of the step-up date and the redeemed securities will be canceled and delisted from the Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Ltd.

The company said the redemption was partially funded by using its entire net proceeds from the 2023 offering and issuance of its Series 4 preferred shares.

In a separate regulatory filing, Petron said it issued about P14 billion worth of Series 4 preferred shares this year, with the net proceeds at P13.88 billion.

In the first quarter, Petron registered a net income of P3.4 billion, down by 5.6% from P3.6 billion in the same period last year.

The decline comes despite the company recording a 9.6% growth in consolidated revenues to P188.8 billion, from P172.3 billion a year earlier, due to sustained fuel demand.

Petron is the operator of the only remaining refinery in the country that provides 40% of local petroleum requirements. Its refinery in Bataan produces 180,000 barrels per day.

It also has about 50 terminals and around 2,700 service stations where it sells gasoline and diesel. Its combined refining capacity is 268,000 barrels a day, producing fuels and petrochemicals. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

Converge tops download, upload speeds in PHL — Opensignal

CONVERGE ICT Solutions, Inc. has topped broadband download speed in the country with an average 52.8 megabits per second, said mobile analytics firm Opensignal.

In its report, Opensignal said the recorded average download speed of Converge was 6.7 Mbps or 14.6% faster than second-placed PLDT Inc.

The company was also the first place for broadband upload speed with an average speed of 35.9 Mbps, or faster by 12.5 Mbps than PLDT's and more than double Globe's 15.2 Mbps.

However, PLDT placed first for broadband peak download speed with a score of 262.1 Mbps, or 32.8 Mbps faster than Converge's 229.3 Mbps.

Meanwhile, Globe and PLDT shared the top spot for broadband consistent quality with "statistically tied" scores of 50.7% to 51.7%, said Opensignal.

Converge users also had the best experience on average when streaming video over fixed broadband with a score of 68.6 points on a 100-point scale, followed by PLDT with 64.7 points and Globe with 60.1 points.

The Dennis Anthony H. Uy-led company also topped the broadband success rate with its users recording an average of 98.1% on successfully completing relative tests for each unique Wi-Fi network it provides.

It was followed by PLDT with 97.5% and Globe with a score of 96.5%, the analytics firm said.

FIXED BROADBAND EXPERIENCE

Opensignal also measured the fixed broadband experience of Converge, PLDT, and Globe users across three key areas Metro Manila, Cebu City, and Davao City.

For Metro Manila, Globe users saw the most consistent fixed broadband experience as 59.9% of tests meet the minimum recommended performance thresholds to watch HD video, conduct video conference calls, and play games.

PLDT followed with 56.2%, then Converge with 50.1%, and Sky Cable with 45.5%.

Meanwhile, Converge topped three measures of the fixed broadband experience in Metro Manila: broadband video

experience, broadband success rate, and broadband upload speed.

PLDT recorded the highest broadband peak download speed in Metro Manila with 291.7 Mbps, while PLDT and Converge shared the top spot for broadband download speed.

Opensignal said that Converge was the provider to beat in Cebu City after it topped five out of six key measures of the fixed broadband experience. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

FULL STORY



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<https://rb.gy/lpp8c>