

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,179.63 ▼ 32.76 PTS.

▼ 0.52%

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2023

BusinessWorld

PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P593.00 +P8.00 +1.37%	ACEN ACEN Corp. P5.05 -P0.02 -0.39%	AEV Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P47.35 -P0.05 -0.11%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P12.30 +P0.02 +0.16%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P28.25 -P0.05 -0.18%	AP Aboitiz Power Corp. P35.00 +P0.05 +0.14%	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P138.00 -P1.00 -0.72%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P108.20 -P4.70 -4.16%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P8.61 +P0.08 +0.94%	DMC DMCI Holdings, Inc. P9.46 -P0.25 -2.57%
EMI Emperador, Inc. P21.05 -P0.10 -0.47%	GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,860.00 -P10.00 -0.53%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P549.50 +P7.50 +1.38%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P205.00 -P0.80 -0.39%	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P241.00 +P2.00 +0.84%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P36.05 -P0.25 -0.69%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P9.25 +P0.03 +0.33%	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P54.45 -P1.25 -2.24%	MER Manila Electric Co. P349.00 -P0.80 -0.23%	MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P6.74 +P0.56 +9.06%
MPI Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P5.09 +P0.04 +0.79%	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P27.35 +P0.10 +0.37%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P31.70 +P0.25 +0.79%	SM SM Investments Corp. P829.00 -P0.50 -0.06%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P104.30 -P0.10 -0.1%	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P30.10 -P0.50 -1.63%	TEL PLDT Inc. P1,211.00 +P1.00 +0.08%	UBP Union Bank of the Philippines P70.10 -P1.80 -2.5%	URC Universal Robina Corp. P113.40 ---	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P21.60 -P0.15 -0.69%

Toyota readies production of new Tamaraw next year, invests P4.4B

By Revin Mikhael D. Ochave
Reporter

JAPANESE automaker Toyota Motor Corp. is investing an additional P4.4 billion in the Philippines for the local production of the next-generation Tamaraw, which could start by the third quarter of next year.

"I'm very pleased to say, that in 2024, for the first time ever, innovative international multi-purpose vehicles (IMVs) such as the next-generation Tamaraw, will be produced as completely built-up units (CBUs) right here in the Philippines at our Santa Rosa plant," Toyota Motor Corp. Chairman Akio Toyoda said on Tuesday.

"This will present an additional investment by Toyota of P4.4 billion," he added.

He made the announcement during his speech at the 35th anniversary of its domestic unit Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. (TMP) in Taguig City as he presented the Tamaraw concept vehicle.

The next-generation Tamaraw is described as a light commercial vehicle (LCV) that is aimed to provide a more affordable vehicle option for entrepreneurs.

"The introduction of the LCV line will help sustain TMP's production operations, while localization of the model will also allow TMP to respond to the specific conversion requirements and specialized needs of Philippine customers," TMP said in a separate statement.

Separately, TMP First Vice-President for Corporate Affairs Rommel R. Gutierrez told reporters on the sidelines of the event that the local production for the Tamaraw, also called IMV-0, could begin by the third quarter of next year.

However, Mr. Gutierrez said the company does not have final details yet on the name, pricing, and production volume.

"It will begin local production around third quarter next year. It is just a concept car. We don't have the details yet, even the name, even the [planned] volume. But it certainly will be produced here," Mr. Gutierrez said.

"As early as now, we are already preparing the production line, and even the parts makers, they have the design. They are also sourcing already," he added.

The next-generation Tamaraw is the third completely knocked-down model to be produced at

TMP's Sta. Rosa plant, alongside the Vios and the Innova.

According to Mr. Gutierrez, the new Tamaraw could be used for the businesses of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), or as an ambulance, patrol car, and modernized jeepney.

"It is going to be very affordable for MSMEs. We want to support the MSMEs," he said.

Mr. Gutierrez also hinted at the possibility that the next-generation Tamaraw could have a hybrid or electric-powered variant.

"It is a matter of time. As you know, the current models that we have, there are already hybrid variants. So in the future, [it's] possible," he said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Gutierrez said the P4.4 billion investment will be used for the vehicle's parts localization, among others.

He added that TMP is looking at including the production of the Tamaraw in the government's Comprehensive Automotive Resurgence Strategy (CARS) program, which was recently extended for five years.

"It depends. Of course, we need the support of the government. Any form of support would really be crucial to this," Mr. Gutierrez said.

The CARS program, introduced in 2015 under Executive Order No. 182, mandated participating car manufacturers to produce at least 200,000 units of their enrolled model to avail of incentives. The enrolled model is eligible for P9 billion worth of fiscal support.

The program participants are TMP and Mitsubishi Motors Philippines Corp. (MMPC).

Under the program, MMPC produces the Mirage hatchback and G4 sedan, while TMP manufactures the Vios sedan.

Before the five-year extension, MMPC had until this year to meet the required production while TMP had until next year.

As of mid-2023, TMP locally manufactured 1.03 million units, delivered a total of 2.24 million units to Filipinos, and received over 16 million units for servicing across dealer workshops in the country.

"TMP and the Toyota Group have cumulatively invested P73.7 billion since 2000. The Group has paid duties and taxes of P448 billion and exported P18.76-billion worth of auto parts and components since 1997," the company said.

MWSS seeks increased water allocation of 50 cms for Sept.

THE Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) is seeking an increased allocation to 50 cubic meters per second (cms) from the Angat-Ipo-La Mesa water system for September.

Patrick James B. Dizon, head of the MWSS Angat-Ipo operations management division, said in a Viber message that the agency requested the increase from the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) earlier this month.

"We had a meeting with the interagency TWG (technical working group) on Angat Dam operations and management chaired by NWRB on 10 Aug. 2023 and during that meeting, we already presented our request of 50 cms," he said.

Mr. Dizon said the agency would send a letter to the NWRB by Thursday to reiterate the request.

Last month, the NWRB said it was considering further cutting the allocation to the MWSS as the Angat dam's water level continued to decline.

The water level in Angat fell below its minimum operating

level of 180 meters as it reached 178 meters on July 14.

It went back to its normal operating level later that month amid the heavy rains from Typhoon Egay (international name: Doksuri) and the enhanced southwest monsoon.

As of Wednesday morning, the water level in Angat Dam is at 198.08 meters, lower by 0.4 meters from the 198.12 meters seen on Tuesday.

Mr. Dizon said the water elevation may increase for the coming weeks and months, citing a projection from the state weather bureau Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

"That was based from the projected rainfall by PAGASA for the next months and the historical watershed inflows from the river tributaries of Angat Dam during the El Niño year," he said.

The MWSS official said the NWRB will have a board meeting on Aug. 31 to discuss the water allocation for September. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

SEC warns against investing in White Dragon

THE Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has warned against investing in White Dragon Investment Group, which is not authorized to solicit investments from the public.

In an advisory dated Aug. 22 posted on its website, the SEC said that White Dragon Investment Group is not registered with the commission based on the agency's records.

"The public is advised not to invest or stop investing in any investment scheme being offered by White Dragon Investment Group as well as in other entities having the same or similar schemes and to exercise caution in dealing with any individuals or group of

persons soliciting investments or recruiting investors for and on behalf of white dragon investment group," the agency said.

"Moreover, the securities in the form of investment contract that it is offering to the public are likewise not registered with the Commission in violation of Sections 8, 26, and 28 of the Securities Regulation Code," it added.

According to the SEC, White Dragon is engaged in programs related to the expansion and development of sectors including real estate, food and beverage, franchising, leisure and gaming services, poultry and egg, and private investments.

White Dragon is allegedly recruiting investors by offering

investments to the public for a minimum amount of P100,000 for 3% monthly interest or a total of 36% annual return on investment.

"Such investment opportunity being offered through Justin Arvin Santon Atendido is a form of securities as the elements of investment contract are present in the investment offering, hence, must be registered pursuant to the provision of Section 8 of the Securities Regulation Code (SRC)," the SEC said.

The commission said the Financial Products and Services Consumer Protection Act (FCPA) also forbids investment fraud, which is defined as "any form of deceptive solicitation of investments

from the public which includes Ponzi schemes and such other schemes involving the promise or offer of profits or returns sourced from the investments or contributions made by the investors themselves and the offering or selling of investment schemes to the public without a license."

It also warned that violators of both the FCPA and the SRC could be penalized with a separate maximum fine of P5 million or a penalty of 21-year imprisonment or both.

BusinessWorld sought the comment of White Dragon but has yet to respond as of deadline time. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Eastern Communications trials free cloud service

LOCAL telecommunications company Eastern Communications launched a free trial that will allow business owners to use cloud services for their operations.

In a statement on Wednesday, the company said enterprises can take advantage of the cloud service free trial until Oct. 31. The service features stringent security features so users can maximize the free trial without worrying about data privacy and safety.

"Satisfied users who would like to continue their Eastern Cloud subscription after the trial can explore the match subscription funds of up to \$1,000.

Additionally, customers will experience a smooth transition as Eastern offers a complimentary migration tool that provides uninterrupted continuity," the company said.

"If users are looking to maximize the cloud through a flexible subscription, they can enjoy the latest features — Platform as a Service (PaaS), Eastern Cloud Virtual Router, and SGX Confidential Computing," it added.

According to Eastern Communication, the PaaS feature allows businesses to employ higher-level programming with lower complexity as well as create customizable applications from scratch and reduces the

costs involved in developing cloud-based products.

"Eastern Cloud Virtual Router, and SGX Confidential Computing on the other hand, ensure maximum safety of the cloud through added network security and redundancy features," the company said.

Eastern Communications said some of the products offered for free under the cloud service trial include 10GB RAM, 500GB of hard disk drive (HDD) storage, 100GB of solid-state drive (SSD) storage, 2 IP addresses, 1 VLAN, and 1 terabyte of outbound data transfer.

Interested individuals and business could use the free

cloud service for 30 days and experience a cloud network for their day-to-day operations.

"As we enter the latter part of the year, Eastern Communications is dedicated to serving more businesses across the nation. Cloud adoption is pivotal for all businesses, ushering in their growth and innovation," Eastern Communications Vice-President and Head for Product and Innovation Edsel C. Paglinawan said.

"In today's digital era, cloud adoption will provide businesses the capacity to cover a larger scope of work, a space for collaboration, and a multi-purpose hosting platform that offers flexibility," he added. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

BCDA sets initial phase of Marine Corps' relocation

THE Bases Conversion and Development Authority (BCDA) has begun the preparatory works for the first construction package for the relocation of the Philippine Marine Corps headquarters to Bataan.

"We commend BCDA for facilitating the construction of roads, utilities, and preparatory works and the replication project as a whole for the Philippine Marine Corps. We would not be here without their dedication, hard work, and persistence in this endeavor," said Philippine Marine Corps Commandant Major General Arturo M. Rojas in a statement on Wednesday.

The recent groundbreaking ceremony signaled the start of the first package of the relocation of roads, utilities and other preparatory works of the Morong Discovery Park Phase 1 Project.

"The start of construction works for Package 1 today will help us get closer to our goal of providing a new, modern and state-of-the-art headquarters for the Marines that will support the operational efficiency of our troops in responding to national threats; in delivering aid during calamities; and in fostering peace and order across the country," BCDA Chairman Delfin N. Lorenzana said.

On the day of the ceremony, BCDA also installed the steel columns for the Philippine Marine Corps grandstand, which is part of the ongoing construction of the parade grounds that is expected to be completed by November this year.

Construction packages 2 and 3 previously commenced in February last year, while the BCDA aims

to complete the first phase of the project by 2024.

"We don't want to lose sight of our focus on helping strengthen the Armed Forces. We will continue to share revenues and support the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines) Modernization Program," said BCDA President and Chief Executive Officer Joshua M. Bingang.

As part of the relocation program, BCDA has provided 100 hectares of its land in Morong Discovery Park for the Philippine Marines Headquarters, which only covers 12.65 hectares in its previous location in Fort Bonifacio, Taguig.

It is located at the eastern half of the park directly facing the West Philippine Sea and is accessible to major access roads including the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway.

"The Bataan location was deemed strategic for the Marines as it would help expedite emergency response and ease deployment of troops," BCDA said.

The transfer is also seen to open up income-generating opportunities as the area in Fort Bonifacio will be vacated.

From May 1993 to December 2022, BCDA's contribution to the AFP reached P59.71 billion, P48.59 billion of which will be used for the latter's rehabilitation program, while the remaining P11.12 billion is earmarked for the replication of military facilities.

Under Republic Act No. 7227, BCDA is mandated to generate funds for the AFP Modernization Program by transforming former US military bases and Metro Manila camps into economic growth areas. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**