

## Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,183.07

▼ 58.62 PTS.

▼ 0.93%

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BusinessWorld

## PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

<b>AC</b> Ayala Corp. P618.00 -P2.00 -0.32%	<b>ACEN</b> ACEN Corp. P4.99 -P0.06 -1.19%	<b>AEV</b> Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P48.65 +P0.95 +1.99%	<b>AGI</b> Alliance Global Group, Inc. P12.70 -P0.10 -0.78%	<b>ALI</b> Ayala Land, Inc. P27.35 -P1.00 -3.53%	<b>AP</b> Aboitiz Power Corp. P34.20 -P0.80 -2.29%	<b>BDO</b> BDO Unibank, Inc. P134.20 -P3.50 -2.54%	<b>BPI</b> Bank of the Philippine Islands P105.00 ---	<b>CNVRG</b> Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P8.30 -P0.03 -0.36%	<b>DMC</b> DMCI Holdings, Inc. P10.10 -P0.26 -2.51%
<b>EMI</b> Emperador, Inc. P20.80 -P0.20 -0.95%	<b>GLO</b> Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,765.00 -P25.00 -1.4%	<b>GTCAP</b> GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P580.00 +P5.00 +0.87%	<b>ICT</b> International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P206.60 +P1.20 +0.58%	<b>JFC</b> Jollibee Foods Corp. P234.20 -P2.80 -1.18%	<b>JGS</b> JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P38.55 +P0.55 +1.45%	<b>LTG</b> LT Group, Inc. P9.08 ---	<b>MBT</b> Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P55.00 -P0.50 -0.9%	<b>MER</b> Manila Electric Co. P349.00 +P4.00 +1.16%	<b>MONDE</b> Monde Nissin Corp. P7.80 +P0.20 +2.63%
<b>MPI</b> Metro Pacific Investments Corp. P4.85 -P0.15 -3%	<b>PGOLD</b> Puregold Price Club, Inc. P29.65 +P0.70 +2.42%	<b>SCC</b> Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P32.20 -P0.05 -0.16%	<b>SM</b> SM Investments Corp. P824.00 -P32.00 -3.74%	<b>SMC</b> San Miguel Corp. P105.10 -P0.30 -0.28%	<b>SMPH</b> SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P29.85 +P0.05 +0.17%	<b>TEL</b> PLDT Inc. P1,200.00 -P1.00 -0.08%	<b>UBP</b> Union Bank of the Philippines P71.00 -P0.70 -0.98%	<b>URC</b> Universal Robina Corp. P117.00 +P0.10 +0.09%	<b>WLCON</b> Wilcon Depot, Inc. P22.80 +P0.90 +4.11%

## SEC amends rules to support crowdfunding portals

THE Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) has added registered funding portals as authorized registrars of qualified buyers of securities under the rules governing crowdfunding.

SEC Memorandum Circular No. 12, posted on the agency's website on Sept. 6, has amended Section 39.1.4.1 of the implementing rules and regulations of the Securities Regulation Code (SRC) to include funding portals registered under the SEC Crowdfunding Rules in the list of authorized registrars of qualified institutional buyers and individual buyers of securities.

SEC Commissioner Kelvin Lester K. Lee said the amendment is part of the corporate regulator's efforts to give more options to stakeholders.

"The SEC wanted to expand such functions to crowdfunding

portals thus allowing more options to stakeholders. It is also part of the commission's overall direction to boost the capital markets," Mr. Lee told *BusinessWorld* via mobile phone.

"By supporting crowdfunding portals, among others, the commission ensures that there are viable alternative means to raise capital available to the public," he added.

Authorized registrars are entities that have been granted the appropriate secondary license by the commission. They may be authorized to act as a registrar upon proper application and compliance with registration requirements.

Aside from funding portals registered under the SEC crowdfunding rules, the SEC said other authorized registrars are banks (with respect to their registration

as broker-dealer), government securities eligible dealer, government securities brokers, and/or underwriters of securities.

Other authorized registrars are brokers, dealers, investment houses, investment company advisers, and issuer companies (with respect to offerings of their own securities).

On Aug. 18, the SEC issued the proposed amendments to the SRC and sought the comment of interested parties until Aug. 24.

Meanwhile, the SEC said in a separate statement that it secured the conviction of six individuals involved in an investment scam operated by GDM Finance SARM, making it the 22<sup>nd</sup> conviction for violations of the Philippine securities law.

In a joint decision dated April 17, the Pasig City Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 158

deemed Anita E. Armada, Milany P. Cabrera, Josephine D. Maranan, Nanette D. Tongco, Gerald L. Samson, and Jacinto Lucio P. De Catalina guilty beyond reasonable doubt of violating Sections 8 and 26 of the SRC. The individuals were sentenced to pay a P100,000 fine each, with subsidiary imprisonment.

The individuals were arrested following an entrapment operation of the SEC's Enforcement and Investor Protection Department (EIPD) with the Philippine National Police Anti-Cybercrime Group in November 2018.

"The case stemmed from an information received by the SEC EIPD in July 2018, alleging that GDM had conducted a seminar in a mall where speakers enticed the audience to invest in GDM for a weekly return of at least 2.5%," the corporate regulator said.

"After conducting an on-site field investigation, the EIPD confirmed that GDM indeed engaged in investment-taking activities. The investigation also uncovered that GDM had a Facebook account where it advertised that it could pay dividends to shareholders and provide a steady return on investment received," it added.

Under Section 8 of the SRC, the sale or distribution of securities without first being registered with the SEC is prohibited. Section 26 of the law also forbids individuals from employing fraud, deceit, and omission to garner investments from the public.

"GDM had not registered any securities with the commission as required under the SRC. Neither had it secured a license to issue mutual funds, exchange-traded

funds and proprietary or non-proprietary shares or membership certificates and timeshares," the SEC said.

The SEC has secured the conviction of 33 individuals in 22 cases meted by the courts with a total imprisonment of 712 years and an aggregate fine of P28.4 million, as of writing.

As of September, 355 individuals are being actively prosecuted before the RTCs in 145 cases for violations of the SRC and two cases for violations of Republic Act No. 11765 or the Financial Products and Services Consumer Protection Act.

The SEC has filed criminal complaints against 31 corporations and 239 individuals before the Department of Justice as of June 30, all of which are currently pending resolution. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

## Del Monte Pacific trims loss, expects net profit

DEL MONTE Pacific Ltd. (DMPL) trimmed its net loss in the past quarter on the back of higher sales, turning the listed company bullish about generating profit in the second half of its fiscal year that started in May.

In a stock exchange disclosure on Thursday, DMPL said it incurred a net loss of \$13.1 million in its first quarter that ended in July, an improvement from the \$30.5-million net loss a year ago.

"Last year's net loss had included (US-subsiary) Del Monte Foods Inc.'s (DMFI) one-off refinancing cost of \$71.9 million gross or \$50.2 million net of tax and non-controlling interest," DMPL said.

DMPL's sales rose 13% to \$516.7 million during the period from \$456.6 million previously on the back of higher sales in the US and of fresh pineapple, which increased 18% and 23%, respectively.

The company's US unit, DMFI, generated sales of \$356.4 million during the period, accounting for 69% of group turnover. It saw

improved market share positions across the packaged vegetables, fruits, tomatoes, and fruit cup snacks segments.

"DMFI's volume grew by 5% while sales improved by 18% driven by pricing actions and strong growth and development of the company's branded product portfolio in both traditional and emerging channels," the company said.

On the other hand, the Philippine market posted \$75.9 million in sales, up 5% in peso terms but flat in dollar terms due to currency depreciation.

The Philippine market saw improvements across its five core categories of packaged pineapple, mixed fruit, beverage, tomato, and spaghetti sauces. Food service and convenience store channels also saw higher sales, up 25% and 16%, respectively.

"Sales of packaged fruit, beverage and culinary were higher, supported by compelling communication campaigns including Saucy Weekends campaign promoting tomato sauce, and value-for-money offers amidst

the inflationary environment," the company said.

For its international markets, the company said its fresh sales also rose 23% following higher sales of S&W Deluxe fresh pineapples and better pricing.

DMPL Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer Joselito D. Campos, Jr. said the company's margins were "under pressure with inflation while interest rates rose" which affected the overall bottom line.

"We are determined to bring margins up in the second half of our fiscal year through a combination of price adjustment and cost reduction, including minimizing waste further by continuously improving processes, and leveraging technology to enhance efficiency and lower expenses," Mr. Campos said.

"Reducing leverage and interest expense is a key imperative and we are exploring all options to strengthen our capital structure," he added.

Meanwhile, DMPL said it expects higher net profit in fiscal year 2024, particularly in the

second half, barring unforeseen circumstances.

The company added that it is planning to increase the production of its MD2 fresh pineapple to support higher exports.

"In the US, there will be increased penetration into channels such as club, e-commerce, dollar, convenience, natural and foodservice, while accelerating innovation and its contribution to spur sales growth. New market development initiatives in Mexico, South America, and Canada driven by resources dedicated to expanding distribution of DMFI's branded portfolio in those markets including Kitchen Basics are expected to contribute to sales growth," the company said.

"The price increase implemented in the US on July 31 will also allow DMFI to offset inflation and improve gross margins in the second to fourth quarters of fiscal year 2024," it added.

On Thursday, shares of DMPL at the local bourse rose 16 centavos or 2.18% to finish at P7.50 apiece. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

## DITO CME unit issues shares for equity requirements of telco unit

A subsidiary of DITO CME Holdings Corp. has issued new shares to Summit Global Ltd. as part of efforts to bankroll the equity requirements of telco firm Dito Telecommunity Corp.

In a stock exchange disclosure on Thursday, DITO CME said its subsidiary DITO Holdings Corp. issued around 2.24 billion shares to Summit Global, an entity organized and existing under the laws of the Cayman Islands, at P1.00 per share.

"The issuance of new shares at DITO Holdings amounts to approximately 18.5% of its issued and outstanding capital stock," DITO CME said.

Following the issuance, DITO CME will own 72.91% of DITO Holdings, down from the previous 89.46% stake.

"The proceeds from such issuance of shares were used to fund the additional equity requirements of its operating subsidiary, DITO Telecommunity, through the payment of subscription payables of DITO Holdings to DITO Telecommunity," DITO CME said.

DITO Telecommunity is a Dennis A. Uy-led telecommunication firm.

On Thursday, shares of DITO at the local market dropped one centavo or 0.45% to close at 2.19 apiece. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

## AirAsia sees stronger travel demand during 'Ber' months

LOW-COST carrier AirAsia Philippines is expecting stronger demand for travel with the start of the "Ber" months after guests booked various domestic and international destinations during the recent Philippine Travel Mart fair.

In a statement on Thursday, the airline said the top domestic destinations booked by guests for travel within 90 days were Caticlan (Boracay), Tagbilaran, and Cebu, while the top three international destinations were Bangkok, Osaka, and Narita.

"We see our guests now preparing early for their vacation during the latter part of this year. This positive reception from our guests will help us jumpstart our goal of growing our market share next year through the mounting new flights to East Asia with the help of

the reactivation of our Kalibo and Clark hubs," AirAsia Philippines Chief Executive Officer Ricardo P. Isla said.

Currently, AirAsia Philippines has 400 weekly flights to 27 domestic and international destinations out of Manila, five out of Cebu, and one out of Clark.

Starting Sept. 1, the airline will continue to service its guests from Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) Terminal 3 to other international destinations such as Macao (daily), Shenzhen, Guangzhou, and Shanghai (2x weekly), Bangkok (daily), Hong Kong (daily), Kota Kinabalu (3x weekly), Osaka (daily), Seoul (3x daily), Taipei (2x daily), Kaohsiung (3x weekly), and Taipei (4x weekly), and via Mactan-Cebu International Airport to Tokyo (daily) and Seoul (daily).

Domestic flights via NAIA Terminal 2 continue to fly to Bacolod (3x daily), Bohol (4x daily), Caticlan (7x daily), Cagayan de Oro (2x daily), Cebu (7x daily), Davao (5x daily), Iloilo (4x daily), Kalibo (3x daily), Puerto Princessa (3x daily), Roxas (3x weekly), and Tacloban (4x daily), and via Cebu to Caticlan (3x weekly) and Davao (3x weekly), as well as daily flights to Caticlan from Clark International Airport.

Meanwhile, AirAsia said it signed an agreement with Duty Free Philippines on Sept. 1 to offer discounts for guests buying in the latter's three stores.

Starting September, guests flying with AirAsia are eligible to receive up to

5% off on all purchases across three Duty Free stores namely in Fiestamall, Luxe, and NAIA Terminal 3.

"We hope that this exercise will add an extra level of excitement to reunions, especially since we expect some 1.7 million tourist arrivals until December. We know that the Ber months are the onset of reunions so what better way to delight our guests than to give them more room for spending for *pasalubong* to their loved ones," Mr. Isla said.

"This is also timely especially since most of our local and international destinations have started to pick up for the final quarter of 2023," he added. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code or by typing the link <tinyurl.com/4d174fzv>

## Pick.A.Roo offers support for smaller bars and restaurants

DELIVERY app Pick.A.Roo on Wednesday unveiled its new one-stop shop segment for micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) tackling post-pandemic supply chain challenges.

Pick.A.Roo Wholesale aims to enable independent restaurant and bar businesses in the metropolitan area by catering to their sourcing and delivery needs on-demand, Kevin Tan, founder of Pick.A.Roo, said in a press statement.

Streamlined inventory management through the platform will allow business owners to focus on their core operations, Mr. Tan added.

"We're excited to bridge the gap between business owners and industry suppliers, offering a solution that alleviates the challenges of maintaining a consistent supply chain," he said.

The Asian Development Bank reported that 73.1% of Philippine

MSMEs faced stalled operations and a sharp drop in domestic demand due to the mobility restrictions imposed at the onset of the pandemic.

While businesses struggle to recover from the economic crisis, helping them thrive in the post-pandemic landscape is the

company's aim, Mr. Tan said. "[This will] cater to the growing market of micro-businesses in the Philippines," said Eric B. Bataga, chief executive officer of Pick.A.Roo.

"We're collaborating closely with business owners and suppliers, not only to bolster the food and beverage industry but also to contribute to the revitalization of the Philippine economy."

The Pick.A.Roo Wholesale platform has more than 400,000 stock-keeping units, collaborating with industry suppliers, and servicing 40 cities. — **Miguel Hanz L. Antivola**

