

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,234.77

▼ 71.08 pts.

▼ 1.12%

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023

BusinessWorld

PSEI MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P640.00 -P20.50 -3.1%	ACEN ACEN Corp. P4.60 ---	AEV Aboltiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P48.10 -P0.90 -1.84%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P9.78 +P0.13 +1.35%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P31.40 ---	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P126.90 -P2.80 -2.16%	BLOOM Bloomerry Resorts Corp. P9.60 -P0.04 -0.41%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P101.90 -P2.60 -2.49%	CNPF Century Pacific Food, Inc. P32.60 +P0.10 +0.31%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P8.00 -P0.20 -2.44%
DMC DMCI Holdings, Inc. P9.31 +P0.01 +0.11%	EMI Emperador, Inc. P20.80 -P0.05 -0.24%	GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,729.00 +P11.00 +0.64%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P557.00 +P5.50 +1%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P229.00 -P6.00 -2.55%	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P235.80 -P5.20 -2.16%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P37.80 -P1.10 -2.83%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P8.79 -P0.01 -0.11%	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P51.45 +P0.60 +1.18%	MER Manila Electric Co. P372.60 -P0.40 -0.11%
MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P8.04 -P0.16 -1.95%	NIKL Nickel Asia Corp. P5.10 ---	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P27.25 -P0.15 -0.55%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P28.70 -P0.30 -1.03%	SM SM Investments Corp. P826.00 -P2.00 -0.24%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P111.00 ---	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P32.65 -P0.35 -1.06%	TEL PLDT Inc. P1,252.00 -P18.00 -1.42%	URC Universal Robina Corp. P112.80 +P0.40 +0.36%	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P20.50 +P0.40 +1.99%

Three entities secure gov't deals for RE projects

THE Department of Energy (DoE) has awarded service contracts to three entities for their renewable energy (RE) projects, the listed companies behind the planned power sources separately said on Thursday.

Basic Energy Corp., Alternergy Holdings Corp., and A Brown Co., Inc. said they had received their respective service agreements with the government, giving them an exclusive right to explore, develop, and utilize energy sources in their chosen project areas.

Basic Energy's wind energy service contract (WESC) is for the proposed Ilocos Nearshore Wind Power Project located in

Pasquin, Ilocos Norte, which covers 5,502.54 hectares.

"The Ilocos Norte WESC is the latest addition to Basic Energy's growing portfolio of wind projects which the Company looks forward to developing," the company said.

The project's service contract took effect on Sept. 15. It is expected to generate and deliver electricity to the grid ranging from 90- to 112-megawatt (MW) power based on a four-model simulation done by a foreign third-party consultant.

"With the effectivity of the said contract, [Basic Energy] will now initiate the deployment of its resources for the wind resource assessment campaign to

validate wind regime in the said area," the company said.

Alternergy Holdings Corp., through its subsidiary Liberty Solar Energy Corp. (LSEC), has been awarded a solar energy operating contract for its proposed Apulid Solar Power Project in Paniqui, Tarlac.

The project has a potential capacity of 49.9 MW of alternating current or 80 MW in defined conditions.

"Alternergy is excited to immediately pursue the development. Consistent with Alternergy's pioneering initiatives in the RE industry, the Apulid Solar Power Project will be one of the first solar aquavoltaic projects in the country," Alternergy Chair-

man and LSEC President Vicente S. Pérez said in a media release.

The planned solar farm is a ground-mounted facility to be co-located and integrated within an operational aquaculture farm.

Mr. Pérez said that the project "will serve a dual purpose which is to supply clean power to the grid and to sustain the aquaculture's farm production."

LSEC's board of directors has approved the relinquishment of the award for the solar power project under the second round of the green energy auction (GEA), the government's program of procuring RE supply through competitive bidding at a set maximum or ceiling price.

Mr. Pérez said that LSEC has opted not to pursue the second round of GEA as an offtake mechanism as "there are other potential markets which could bring better value to the project while at the same time continue to contribute to achieving the government's renewable energy target."

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, Alternergy said that LSEC's board of directors approved the delivery to the DoE of P50 million by way of security for the company's participation.

"It's the option of the bidder. It was disqualified and the bid bond was called as a consequence of such decision," Marissa P. Cerezo, director of DoE-Renewable En-

ergy Management Bureau, said in a Viber message.

The DoE has also awarded a WESC to Hydro Link Projects Corp. (HLPC), a subsidiary of listed A Brown Co., Inc., for its proposed wind power projects in Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental.

The service contracts are effective starting on Nov. 28.

HLPC has been duly registered as a renewable energy developer of the Bukidnon Wind Power Project and Misor Wind Power Project.

"With the award of the service contract, HLPC will proceed with pre-development activities and studies to ascertain the feasibility of the applied areas," the company said. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

Manila Water signs P10-B loan for capital spending

MANILA Water Co., Inc. said on Thursday that it had signed a P10-billion term loan facility with a local bank to partly fund its capital expenditure projects.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange, the east-zone water concessionaire said the 10-year term loan facility was extended by Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.

The loan comes after Manila Water subsidiary Laguna AAA Water Corp., or Laguna Water, signed in August a P1.6-billion term loan facility with Bank of the Philippine Islands to finance its capital spending until 2025.

Laguna Water is a joint venture between the provincial government of Laguna and Manila Water Philippine Ventures, Inc. It operates in the cities of Biñan, Santa Rosa, Cabuyao, and the municipality of Pagsanjan.

It also supplies Alaminos, Calamba, San Pablo, Sta. Cruz, and Victoria.

Currently, Manila Water is seeking approval for the extension of its revised concession agreement with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

In line with the extension application, Manila Water has committed to allocate P1.15 trillion for investments, primarily to ensure the continuous provision of water and wastewater services to its customers in the east zone.

Last month, the company held a public hearing for the contract extension, citing the support it could give to the government by funding an estimated expenditure of approximately P721 billion.

The MWSS is currently reviewing the application of Manila Water, along with

west-zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc.

In the third quarter, Manila Water saw its attributable net income rise by 38.1% to P2.21 billion from P1.6 billion in the same quarter last year, based on its quarterly report.

Gross revenues during the period increased by 33.9% to P7.75 billion while gross expenses slightly grew by 0.3% to P3.9 billion.

At the local bourse on Thursday, shares of Manila Water went down by 10 centavos or 0.55% to close at P18 apiece.

The water concessionaire serves the east zone network of Metro Manila, covering parts of Marikina, Pasig, Makati, Taguig, Pateros, Mandaluyong, San Juan, portions of Quezon City and Manila, and several towns in Rizal province. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**



Grab readies expansion of service, EV operation

GRAB Philippines is gearing up to expand its presence to serve more locations in the country while also planning to operate electric vehicles (EVs), a company official said.

Grace Vera-Cruz, the ride-hailing app's country head, told reporters about new areas for the transportation network vehicle service (TNVS).

"We're trying to see if we can open a few more not just for four-wheel but also for two-wheel [vehicles]," she said.

Ms. Vera-Cruz declined to identify the areas being considered apart from describing them as somewhere in the north.

"For four-wheel, there is one in the north. It has been so long since we wanted to operate Grab cars there but the local government does not want to. I think they are trying to control the number of cars," she said, adding that the company is also keen to operate EVs.

"We will try EVs. By hook or by crook, we will try. We already asked the LTFRB (Land Transportation Franchising and Regu-

latory Board). We have to redo or rethink the process to accommodate EVs," Ms. Vera-Cruz added.

Apart from expanding its presence, Grab is also keen on operating in Mindanao, while also seeking additional slots for its operations in Visayas, specifically in Cebu.

"Right now, we are trying to ask the LTFRB for the Cebu slots because they are [experiencing] undersupply," she said.

The company is seeking between 5,000 and 6,000 additional slots for TNVS in Cebu from the current 10,000 slots.

Meanwhile, the company remains optimistic that Grab can still accommodate the growing demand amid the holiday rush despite not being granted "holiday" fleets or temporary partner-drivers to augment the supply in December.

"We had a meeting with DoTr (Department of Transportation). We're still trying to see what we can do, especially on the 20th to 25th, but as of today, we are still very good," she said. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

Globe closes more tower sales for P1.5B

GLOBE Telecom, Inc. said it had closed deals for the sale of its 120 telecommunication towers to Frontier Tower Associates Philippines, Inc. for about P1.5 billion.

Overall, the listed telecommunication company has closed 2,214 out of 3,529 towers for Frontier Towers' acquisition, it told the stock exchange on Thursday.

"There will be multiple closing dates which will happen as and when closing conditions are met. We will continue to provide updates on the relevant development of the disposal of tower assets in due course," the company said.

In August, Globe closed deals to sell 213 telecommunication towers to Frontier Tower and MIESCOR Infrastructure Development Corp. for around P2.6 billion.

Globe said the sale of 113 of the towers was closed in August with Frontier Tower for a total cash consideration of P1.4 billion.

It added that 77% of the 113 towers are ground-based and 23% are rooftop-based located in Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

Buying trend for healthy consumer products to continue, says Kantar

THE PURCHASE of healthier fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) is seen continuing despite rising prices, marketing data and analytics company Kantar said in an online briefing on Thursday.

Marie-Anne Lezoraine, managing director for Kantar Philippines Worldpanel Division, said that she expects the buying trend to continue, "but it is something that shoppers have to balance on a daily basis."

"What we found is that during the pandemic, people have become much more aware [of] the role of nutrition in immunity. We saw that it had an impact on what people were purchasing," Ms. Lezoraine said.

Kantar reported that 72% of Filipino consumers are seen prioritizing the purchase of healthier FMCG products.

The report also said that an estimated 99% of Filipino shoppers see being healthy as important, while 97% say that buying health products is important for the family.

"Purchase power, inflation, and affordability of products will be a key consideration," she added.

For November, headline inflation slowed to 4.1% from 4.9% last month and 8% in the same period last year, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority.

Ms. Lezoraine added that residents of the National Capital Region were seen purchasing more, by 84%, healthier food compared with those in Mindanao at 55%.

She said health remains a priority for most Filipino shoppers despite inflation or global uncertainties.

"What comes through is that... [it] is the reflection of a

personal concern for the family... or it is an impact of the pandemic," she added.

Kantar also reported that socioeconomic status does not seem to make a big impact on families' consistency in purchasing healthy grocery items.

About 77% of the upper class (ABC) were seen buying healthier products often, followed closely by class D (70%) and class E (75%).

Kantar's study gathered 1,200 respondents from February to April. "Filipino shoppers have expressed their desire to choose healthy and to buy healthy. Knowing why health is important and how shoppers define healthy grocery items will help brands develop or expand product lines to cater to these motivations and shopping practice," Ms. Lezoraine said. — **Adrian H. Halili**

NLEX Corp. seeks toll fee hike from regulator after interchange completion

NLEX Corp., a unit of Metro Pacific Tollways Corp. (MPTC), has applied for an increase in toll fee after the completion of the Magsaysay Interchange, its president said.

"We already filed the petition. It is being evaluated by the TRB (Toll Regulatory Board). It will take the same process [and] the same evaluation so that they can determine whether the fractional toll is reason-

able," NLEX Corp. President and General Manager J. Luigi L. Bautista told reporters on the sidelines of a forum last week.

The company opened the NLEX Connector section 2, beginning from España Boulevard to Magsaysay Section on Oct. 28, data from the company's website showed.

Currently, the tollway company retains the current discounted rate of P86

for the NLEX Connector, Mr. Bautista said. Once approved, the toll fee will increase to P120, he added.

BusinessWorld sought comments from TRB on the status of the application but it has yet to respond as of press time.

The opening of the additional 1.8-kilometer four-lane NLEX Connector helped

ease traffic congestion by cutting the travel time from C3 Road in Caloocan to Magsaysay Boulevard in Manila to eight minutes.

Overall, the NLEX Connector has three interchanges in C3 Road/5th Avenue in Caloocan, España and Magsaysay Boulevard in Manila.

MPTC is the tollways unit of Metro Pacific Investments Corp., one of three

key Philippine units of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd., the others being Philex Mining Corp. and PLDT Inc.

Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has a majority stake in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**