Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) 6,854.66 ▲56.05 PTS. ▲0.82%

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PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC	Ayala Corp.	P710.00	+P6.50	+0.92%
ACEN	ACEN Corp.	P4.22	+P0.02	+0.48%
AEV	Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc.	P45.55	+P0.25	+0.55%
AGI	Alliance Global Group, Inc.	P10.80	-P0.06	-0.55%
ALI	Ayala Land, Inc.	P34.90	+P0.95	+2.8%
BDO	BDO Unibank, Inc.	P155.00	+P1.90	+1.24%
BLOOM	Bloomberry Resorts Corp.	P11.44	+P0.04	+0.35%
BPI	Bank of the Philippine Islands	P117.80	+P1.10	+0.94%
CNPF	Century Pacific Food, Inc.	P35.40	-P0.60	-1.67%
CNVRG	Converge ICT Solutions, Inc.	P9.70	-P0.24	-2.41%
DMC	DMCI Holdings, Inc.	P10.80	+P0.02	+0.19%
EMI	Emperador, Inc.	P19.22	-P0.48	-2.44%
GLO	Globe Telecom, Inc.	P1,743.00	-P17.00	-0.97%
GTCAP	GT Capital Holdings, Inc.	P688.00	-P2.00	-0.29%
ICT	International Container Terminal Services, Inc.	P290.00	+P14.00	+5.07%
JFC	Jollibee Foods Corp.	P259.00	——	
JGS	JG Summit Holdings, Inc.	P39.60	+P0.55	+1.41%
LTG	LT Group, Inc.	P9.65	+P0.07	+0.73%
MBT	Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co.	P58.90	+P0.20	+0.34%
MER	Manila Electric Co.	P368.00	+P4.00	+1.1%
MONDE	Monde Nissin Corp.	P10.16	-P0.32	-3.05%
NIKL	Nickel Asia Corp.	P4.64	-P0.01	-0.22%
PGOLD	Puregold Price Club, Inc.	P28.00	——	
SCC	Semirara Mining and Power Corp.	P31.65	-P0.25	-0.78%
SM	SM Investments Corp.	P908.00	+P8.00	+0.89%
SMC	San Miguel Corp.	P107.00	——	
SMPH	SM Prime Holdings, Inc.	P32.90	-P0.15	-0.45%
TEL	PLDT Inc.	P1,281.00	+P11.00	+0.87%
URC	Universal Robina Corp.	P112.30	-P2.20	-1.92%
WLCON	Wilcon Depot, Inc.	P23.00	+P0.20	+0.88%

Pangilinan-led MPIC keen on Ayala's LRT-1 stake

PANGILINAN-LED Metro Pacific Investments Corp. (MPIC) is exploring the possibility of acquiring Ayala Corp.'s stake in Light Rail Transit Line 1 (LRT-1), following Ayala's announcement of its divestment plans.

"I think in principle we are [interested] for a number of reasons. One is the possibility of being able to bid for MRT-3 (Metro Rail Transit Line 3). I understand that the government wants to do what they did with NAIA (Ninoy Aquino International Airport), because we submitted an original proposal [for MRT-3]," MPIC Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer Manuel V. Pangilinan told reporters on Monday.

Ayala Corp. is aiming to raise $1 billion through fundraising by divesting its shares in its water and infrastructure assets.

The company hopes to close the sale of its 35% stake in LRT-1 within the year to realign its portfolio in property, telecommunications, and energy.

MPIC, through its unit Metro Pacific Light Rail Corp., holds 35.8% stake in Light Rail Manila Corp. (LRMC), the operator of LRT-1.

The remaining shares in LRMC are owned by Sumitomo Corp. at 19.2% and Philippine Investment Alliance for Infrastructure's Macquarie Investments Holdings (Philippines) Pte. Ltd. at 10%.

Mr. Pangilinan said Ayala's stake is deemed attractive as it will give the company an advantage for its other bids and provide more leeway for its plans.

"Well, to begin with, they have signified their intention publicly to divest. I think it is part of their overall [plan]. And I think it is easier for us to move if it were majority-owned, fully under the control of MPIC. It just gives us more ability to be able to do what we want to do," he said.

MPIC has also signaled its interest in submitting a bid for the operations and maintenance (O&M) of MRT-3, in alignment with the Department of Transportation's preference for a solicited scheme.

To recall, San Miguel Corp. was declared the original proponent for the MRT-3's O&M contract, while MPIC also submitted an unsolicited bid.

The government targets to privatize MRT-3 before the contract expires next year under the build, lease, and transfer agreement with MRT-3 operator Sobrepeña-led Metro Rail Transit Corp.

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

PHILIPPINE STAR/EDD GUMBAN

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

CREC delays initial public offering to second quarter

SAAVEDRA-LED Citicore Renewable Energy Corp. (CREC) has postponed its planned initial public offering (IPO) from March to the second quarter as it assesses offers from "various institutions."

"The company recently received inquiries from other institutions with regard to participation in the IPO," the renewable energy company told the local bourse late Monday.

"Following this, the company is carefully evaluating the offers from the various institutions, and hopes to finalize them at the soonest possible time," it added.

The offer period was initially scheduled from March 11 to 15, with the tentative listing and start of trading on the Philippine Stock Exchange, Inc. (PSE) on March 22.

It was set to offer 2.9 billion common shares at a maximum price of P3.88 apiece, including an additional 435 million outstanding common shares for overallotment.

Earlier this month, the PSE gave its approval for CREC's planned P12.9-billion IPO, while the Securities and Exchange Commission issued its pre-effective approval last month.

CREC.COM.PH

The proceeds from the offer are intended to be used for the company and its subsidiaries' capital expenditures and pipeline development.

CREC also announced on Tuesday that it had broken ground on its second solar power plant in Negros Occidental with an installed capacity of 69 megawatt-peak (MWp), with future plans to expand up to 100 MWp.

The solar power plant covers a land area of 69 hectares and is slated for commercial operations within the year.

"With the completion of this project, we will not only be able to augment the power generation needs of Negros Occidental and the Visayas grid, but also contribute to the growth of the province," CREC President and Chief Executive Officer Oliver Y. Tan said.

The company's first plant in Negros Occidental was commissioned in 2016 and has an installed capacity of 25 MWp.

CREC manages a diversified portfolio of renewable energy generation projects, power project development operations, and retail electricity supply.

It intends to add approximately one gigawatt of ready-to-build solar energy capacity each year through 2027.

CREC is the parent company of Citicore Energy REIT Corp., the country's first real estate investment trust listing focused on renewable energy. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

Manila Water unit allots P5.56 billion for its services in Clark Freeport Zone, Pampanga

A UNIT of Manila Water Co., Inc. has earmarked P5.56 billion for capital expenditure (capex) from 2023 to 2040 to enhance services in the Clark Freeport Zone (CFZ) in Pampanga.

Clark Water Corp. is targeting to increase its current supply by 22% and is set to explore sustainable water sources and water reuse, the company said in an e-mailed statement on Tuesday.

The company serves the CFZ and the Clark Economic Zone as their water supplier and wastewater service provider. It is a unit of Manila Water Philippine Ventures, Inc. (MWPV), which is a subsidiary of Manila Water.

"Through these projects, aside from the goal of continuously improving service for our customers, we also aim to continue supporting CFZ and the Province of Pampanga in their journey as one of the Philippines' major investment hubs," Clark Water General Manager Lyn Zamora said.

Under its service improvement plan, Clark Water President Melvin John Tan said the capex was allocated to develop new infrastructure "anchored on water security, service quality, service accessibility and continuity, and regulatory compliance."

"Clark Water fully supports the goal of making CFZ a premier business and tourism destination by providing locators with quality and sustainable water and wastewater services," the company said.

It has committed to build and expand its water and sewer network and "implement effective maintenance and rehabilitation of its existing network."

To date, Clark Water serves more than 1,000 locators in the CFZ, with around 2,000 water service connections.

In June last year, Manila Water said that MWPV signed a P1.53-billion loan with the Bank of the Philippine Islands to partially fund Clark Water's projects, as well as pay for its service concession obligations.

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.

Shares of Manila Water fell by 1.09% or 20 centavos to close at P18.22 each. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

Cebu Pacific says Pratt & Whitney to supply engines for 15 aircraft

CEBU Air, Inc., operator of budget carrier Cebu Pacific, has opted to proceed with ordering more aircraft engines from American aerospace manufacturer Pratt & Whitney (P&W).

This decision comes amid the grounding of several of the budget carrier's aircraft due to issues related to the engines.

Last year, Cebu Air said that it would lower its fleet growth rate for 2024 as engine maker P&W inspected A320/321 NEO aircraft engines worldwide following suspected issues.

Between 10 and 20 aircraft are currently parked for maintenance due to the P&W issue, the company said earlier.

On Tuesday, the company said it had signed a memorandum of understanding with P&W to provide Cebu Pacific with engines for its 15 narrow-body jets such as A320/A321 fleets.

"This aims to finalize our current order book and help secure our growth up to 2027," Cebu Pacific Chief Executive Officer Michael B. Szucs told the stock exchange on Tuesday.

"In doing so, it also clears the way for us to now focus on the longer-term growth through our major fleet Request for Proposals that are currently underway," he added.

For his part, Rick Deurloo, president of commercial engines at P&W, said: "We appreciate Cebu Pacific's continued confidence in Pratt & Whitney since they initially selected the GTF engine in 2012."

The aircraft engine maker will start making deliveries in 2025, he said.

"With deliveries for this most recent order starting in 2025, the GTF engine will provide even more fuel and carbon emissions savings," Mr. Deurloo said.

Cebu Pacific said the agreement would allow it to strengthen its operations as it plans to explore regional markets in Southeast Asia, China, and Japan to cater the growing travel demand. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

AREIT says net income surges 43% to P4.93B

AREIT, Inc. announced on Tuesday that its net income surged by 43% to P4.93 billion in 2023, driven by increased occupancy rates and asset acquisitions.

The company's revenue increased by 41% to P7.14 billion, while earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization rose by 39% to P5.04 billion, the company said in a regulatory filing.

AREIT properties logged a 97% average occupancy at the end of 2023.

The company said its financial performance last year was carried by the acquisition of One Ayala Avenue East and West Towers at the corner of Ayala Avenue and EDSA, Glorietta 1 and 2 Mall and business process outsourcing buildings at Ayala Center, and MarQuee Mall in Angeles, Pampanga.

"Our growth initiatives will benefit AREIT — profoundly enlarging the portfolio further, diversifying the assets, reducing concentration risk, and most importantly, providing our shareholder's dividend accretion," AREIT President and Chief Executive Officer Carol T. Mills said.

"This is a testament that AREIT, led by its sponsor Ayala Land, Inc., is an integral vehicle for capital recycling and growth, and we remain steadfast in attaining our vision of being the leading and most diversified Philippine REIT," she added.

On Feb. 12, AREIT shareholders approved the property-for-share swap transaction with Ayala Land, Inc. and its subsidiaries Greenhaven Property Ventures, Inc. and Cebu Insular Hotel Co., Inc. involving Ayala Triangle Tower Two, Greenbelt Mall 3 and 5, Holiday Inn & Suites Makati, and SEDA Ayala Center Cebu valued at P21.8 billion, and the 276-hectare industrial land in Zambales owned by Buendia Christiana Holdings Corp. (BCHC), a wholly owned subsidiary of ACEN Corp., worth P6.8 billion.

The company also completed its acquisition of SEDA Lio in El Nido, Palawan, from Econorth Resort Ventures, Inc. for P1.19 billion on Jan. 17.

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According to AREIT, the planned property infusions would bring its assets under management to P117 billion.

"This is in line with AREIT's objectives to significantly expand and diversify its portfolio to capitalize on various growth opportunities across the real estate sector," the company said.

"AREIT will execute the deed of exchange with ALI, its subsidiaries, and BCHC and apply for its approval with the SEC by March 2024. The new shares will be issued, and the income from the assets shall accrue to AREIT upon approval," it added.

The company's board also approved on Tuesday the declaration of cash dividends of 55 centavos per outstanding common share for the 4th quarter of 2023. The dividends are payable on March 20 to shareholders on record as of March 4.

"This latest quarterly dividend brings AREIT's annual dividend-per-share to P2.15 for 2023, an 8.6% increase from P1.98 per share in 2022 nearly double the company's first quarterly payout of 28 centavos per share when it listed in 2020," it said.

On Tuesday, AREIT shares rose by 0.29% or 10 centavos to P34 apiece. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**