

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,837.34

▼41.20 PTS.

▼0.59%

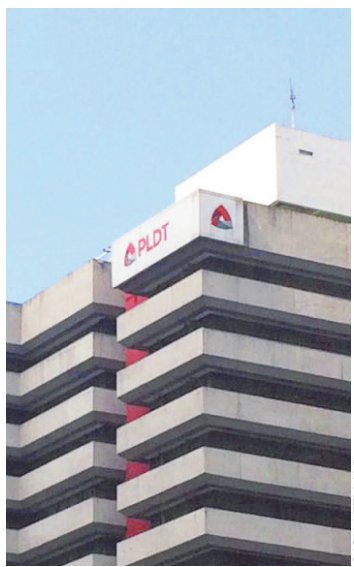
THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2024

BusinessWorld

PSEI MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P675.00 -P8.50 -1.24%	ACEN ACEN Corp. P4.08 +P0.04 +0.99%	AEV Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P49.00 -P0.50 -1.01%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P9.78 -P0.12 -1.21%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P32.80 -P0.50 -1.5%	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P153.00 +P0.50 +0.33%	BLOOM Bloomerry Resorts Corp. P11.42 +P0.06 +0.53%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P117.00 -P0.90 -0.76%	CNPF Century Pacific Food, Inc. P33.90 -P0.75 -2.16%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P8.62 -P0.34 -3.79%
DMC DMCI Holdings, Inc. P11.06 -P0.16 -1.43%	EMI Emperador, Inc. P18.76 -P0.12 -0.64%	GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,746.00 +P1.00 +0.06%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P675.50 -P19.50 -2.81%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P300.00 +P8.00 +2.74%	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P256.00 +P3.00 +1.19%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P39.80 +P0.15 +0.38%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P9.78 +P0.06 +0.62%	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P59.70 -P3.00 -4.78%	MER Manila Electric Co. P365.20 -P1.80 -0.49%
MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P9.90 -P0.07 -0.7%	NIKL Nickel Asia Corp. P4.38 -P0.07 -1.57%	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P27.70 -P0.05 -0.18%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P33.70 +P0.15 +0.45%	SM SM Investments Corp. P960.50 +P7.50 +0.79%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P103.30 -P0.50 -0.48%	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P31.90 -P1.30 -3.92%	TEL PLDT Inc. P1,278.00 -P12.00 -0.93%	URC Universal Robina Corp. P112.40 -P0.90 -0.79%	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P20.50 -P0.85 -3.98%

PLDT expects core income to surpass P35 billion



PLDT Inc. on Thursday said its core net income may exceed P35 billion this year, higher than the previous year's P34.3 billion.

For 2023, PLDT's attributable net income more than doubled to P26.61 billion from P10.49 billion previously on lower expenses and higher top line, the company said in a statement.

PLDT's total revenues grew by 3% to P210.95 billion from P204.36 billion in the same period in 2022, while the company's gross expenses declined by 24% to P158.47 billion from P209.43 billion previously.

Service revenues accounted for the bulk of PLDT's top line for

the period at P201.83 billion, its financial statement showed.

"PLDT is aiming not just for higher profits but to return PLDT and Smart to their premier positions. This requires a commitment to excellence all around — encompassing the quality of our network, the efficiency of our installations and repairs, the innovations we pursue and the speed of our services," Manuel V. Pangilinan, chairman, president, and chief executive officer of PLDT said.

For this year, PLDT expects its core net income to exceed P35 billion, while its service revenues may experience mid-single-digit

growth, said Danny Y. Yu, PLDT's chief financial officer and chief risk management officer.

PLDT's telco core income, which excludes the impact of asset sale and Maya Innovations Holdings, formerly Voyager Innovations Holdings, reached P34.3 billion, up by 3% from P1 billion in 2022.

"We are giving you the outlook for the consolidated service revenues at around mid-single-digit for the full year 2024," Mr. Pangilinan said.

The company is allocating between P75 billion and P78 billion for its capital expenditures (capex) for 2024, which will be allo-

cated for upgrading cell sites, expanding home broadband ports, developing data centers, and investing in submarine cables.

Its capex for the year is 9% lower than its P85.1 billion capex spending in 2023. This year's capital spending will be funded by fresh capex and carry over capex from the previous years.

The company said it is in talks with a foreign entity for the asset management of ePLDT, Inc.'s data centers.

Proceeds from the plan will help reduce the company's debt, Mr. Pangilinan said.

"Just the data centers, because there are two parts of [ePLDT],

the IT and managed services part which provides solutions to enterprises and the data centers, if you may like real estate," he said.

"We're keeping a substantial majority for each other. Well, that is the discussion, 50-50 (stake)," he added.

At the local bourse on Thursday, shares in the company closed P12 or 0.93% lower at P1,278 apiece.

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**

SMGP seen to rely on parent firm for funding support

SAN MIGUEL Global Power Holdings Corp. (SMGP) is expected to be primarily dependent on its parent company San Miguel Corp. (SMC) for funding support, financial research firm CreditSights said on Thursday.

"We believe [SMGP] will primarily rely on parental support from SMC to plug the refinancing gap," CreditSights said in its report.

The firm maintained its "underperform" recommendation on the company. This follows SMGP's announcement of its plans with the subsidiary of Manila Electric Co. and Aboitiz Power Corp. (Aboitiz-Power) to develop an integrated liquefied natural gas (LNG) facility in Batangas valued at \$3.3 billion.

Meralco PowerGen Corp. and AboitizPower, through a joint venture, will acquire 67%

stake in SMGP's gas-fired power plants: the 1,278 megawatt (MW) Ilijan power plant and the 1,320 MW combined cycle power plant.

The three companies will also invest in LNG import and re-gasification terminal owned by Linseed Field Corp.

CreditSights expects "strong near-term parental funding support and fresh asset/stake sales to cover the [US dollar perpetual bond] redemption until May 2025."

"While we acknowledge [SMGP's] healthier FY24 credit outlook aided by an improved cost pass-through contractual mix, lower FY24E input thermal coal costs, and contribution from new capacities... we expect its free cash flows to remain firmly negative amid still-high capex towards the Batangas power project construction," it said.

The firm said that the refinancing of US dollar perpetual bonds "is trickier" despite

the refinancing of existing bank loans or local bonds due to "limited additional appetite towards [SMGP]."

SMC's funding support could sufficiently cover only up to its power arm's perpetual bond for April and May with the conglomerate's capital expenditure needs for its "own sizable airport" and infrastructure.

"Although we welcome [SMGP's] plans to sell 67% stake apiece in its Ilijan and Batangas power plants that would raise fresh cash... we note the company also plans to acquire a 33% stake in a large LNG terminal, and we are unsure of the net cash flow impact amid the lack of concrete details," the firm said.

On Thursday, SMC's shares went down by P0.50 or 0.48% to close at P103.30 apiece. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

SEC, NTC team up to combat unlicensed investment platforms

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Commission (SEC) has teamed up with the National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) in combating investment scams, leading to the blocking of an unlicensed investment platform's website.

"The SEC and NTC will continue to work closely together to take similar actions on other platforms facilitating illegal investment-taking activities and other predatory financial schemes," SEC Chairperson Emilio B. Aquino said in a statement on Thursday.

The NTC issued a memorandum dated Feb. 21 to all internet service providers, mandating them to block the websites and apps of Mittrade due to violations against the Securities Regulation Code, Revised Corporation Code of the Philippines, and regulations enforced by the SEC.

Mittrade allegedly offered the trading of financial instruments across various asset classes like foreign currency pairs, foreign shares, index funds, and commodity derivatives.

"The operators of Mittrade appeared to be registered brokers and dealers overseas, and the securities and investments being offered

likewise appeared to be registered in various countries," the SEC said.

In a Feb. 14 letter, the SEC asked the NTC to block Mittrade's website after the entity was found to be actively employing promotional campaigns on various social media platforms to entice Filipinos in investment and trading activities using its platforms.

The SEC flagged Mittrade in September 2023 and warned the public against transacting with the entity. Mittrade was not registered as a corporation in the Philippines and operated without the required license.

Entities offering any securities for public offering should register with the SEC under the Securities Regulation Code. The registration includes filing an application for registration and providing detailed information about the securities, including the issue price, use of proceeds from the sale, and nature of the securities.

The law also requires that the corporation issuing such securities must secure a license to sell or offer securities to the public from the SEC. Agents of the issuers must likewise register with the commission. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

EEI Power tapped to construct solar rooftop system for Dagupan hospital

THE power subsidiary of listed EEI Corp. has secured a deal with Dagupan Doctors Villaflor Memorial Hospital (DDVMH) in Pangasinan for a solar rooftop system.

EEI Power Corp. will build a 145.2-kilowatt peak solar photovoltaic rooftop system for DDVMH, the listed company said in a regulatory filing on Thursday.

The solar rooftop system will have 264 units of 550-watt peak monocrystalline photovoltaic solar panels.

It is expected to yield an average annual energy output of 183,680 kilowatt-hours.

"Over its 25-year lifespan, the photovoltaic system is estimated to save DDVMH up to P20 million in electricity expenses," EEI Power said.

"It is projected to curtail carbon emission by approximately 128 metric tons annually, equivalent to planting 2,150 trees," it added.

DDVMH is a private tertiary hospital that sits across a two-hectare area in Dagupan City. It features 100 beds and over 150 medical consultants and paramedical staff. The hospital is a part of the Mount Grace Hospitals, Inc. network.

Aside from solar solutions, EEI Power offers various power-related products and services such as high, medium, and low voltage equipment, as well as preventive maintenance, upgrades, power quality analysis, among others.

On Thursday, EEI Corp. shares rose by 0.57% or three centavos to P5.28 apiece. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Toyota PHL secures certification for simplified Customs processes

TOYOTA MOTOR Philippines Corp. has secured Authorized Economic Operator (AEO) Level 2 certification from the Bureau of Customs (BoC), enhancing customs processes, the company announced on Thursday.

The certification provides Toyota with a dedicated processing lane, advance clearance, periodic lodgment, a one-time exemption certificate, and faster customs clearance for exports, the company said in a statement.

The BoC's AEO program aims to enhance legitimate trade facilitation and the smooth movement of goods through secure international supply chains.

"An accreditation certifies that Toyota underwent a rigorous process of assessment and validation as well as met the general and security criteria of the BoC in accordance with the World Customs Organization Framework of Standards to Secure and Facilitate Global Trade," the auto company said.

Toyota was also the first organization to receive level 1 AEO accreditation in 2022.

The company operates at several major BoC ports, such as the Port of Batangas (POB), Manila International Container Port, and Ninoy Aquino International Airport.

"The POB serves as Toyota's gateway for importing

automotive products such as Toyota and Lexus vehicle models, multisourced parts for production, and service parts from the Asia Pacific region," the company said.

The port links its supply chain to distribute automotive products to dealerships in Visayas and Mindanao and to export original equipment manufacturer parts and components produced by Toyota export parts suppliers.

Aside from its new accreditation, the company was also recognized as the country's second top importer after re-mitting P44 billion in duties and taxes in 2023. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

PropertyGuru unveils ESG category at 12th PHL property awards

PROPERTY TECHNOLOGY company PropertyGuru has introduced a new category, the environmental, social, and governance (ESG) developer, in its 12th edition of property awards in the Philippines, aimed at recognizing developers' commitment to sustainability.

"A lot of developers are coming forward, sustainability is a priority," PropertyGuru Asia Property Awards and Events' General Manager Jules Kay said during a media launch.

"We've worked with a couple of ESG partners..., and they want to set new

criteria and to split ESG into more measurable chunks," he added.

The ESG developer category offers four awards: sustainable design, sustainable construction, energy efficiency, and social impact.

The other categories include developer awards, publisher's choice award, best of the best awards, and design awards.

TAJARA Leisure & Hospitality Group, Inc. President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Cyndy Tan Jarabata said that the awarding body encompasses developers from Visayas and Mindanao.

The 12th PropertyGuru Philippines Property Awards is now open for entries from eligible developers and projects, as well as nominations from the public.

The submission of entries will close on June 14. Site inspections will be scheduled from July 1 to Aug. 9, while final judging will take place on Aug. 12.

The gala dinner will be held on Sept. 6, 2024, at the Shangri-La The Fort, Manila, and will also be livestreamed on their official social media accounts.

The panel of judges is chaired by Ms. Jarabata, Vice-Chairman Jaime A.

Cura of RGV Group of Companies, and President & CEO Carlo Cordaro of Ate-lier A. ESCA, Inc. CEO Jean Jacquelyn De Castro and Vitamin B, Inc. Founder & CEO Michelle Barretto also join as judges.

Main award winners may qualify to compete for regional honors at the 19th PropertyGuru Asia Property Awards Grand Final in December 2024 in Bangkok, Thailand.

Robinsons Land Corp. won the best developer award in the previous PropertyGuru Philippines Awards. — **Aubrey Rose A. Inosante**