

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,951.67

▲ 32.08 PTS.

▲ 0.46%

MONDAY, MARCH 4, 2024

BusinessWorld

PSEi MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P687.00 -P4.00 -0.58%	ACEN ACEN Corp. P4.15 ---	AEV Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P49.55 -P0.65 -1.29%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P10.14 -P0.02 -0.2%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P34.90 +P0.10 +0.29%	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P152.00 -P2.00 -1.3%	BLOOM Bloomerry Resorts Corp. P11.38 -P0.22 -1.9%	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P120.00 -P2.00 -1.64%	CNPF Century Pacific Food, Inc. P36.30 +P0.80 +2.25%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P9.29 +P0.10 +1.09%
DMC DMCI Holdings, Inc. P11.50 +P0.26 +2.31%	EMI Emperador, Inc. P19.30 +P0.20 +1.05%	GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,729.00 -P7.00 -0.4%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P708.50 +P2.50 +0.35%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P300.00 +P16.80 +5.93%	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P267.00 -P4.60 -1.69%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P39.85 +P0.35 +0.89%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P9.90 +P0.20 +2.06%	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P63.70 +P2.75 +4.51%	MER Manila Electric Co. P373.00 -P6.80 -1.79%
MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P10.44 +P0.36 +3.57%	NIKL Nickel Asia Corp. P4.55 +P0.05 +1.11%	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P28.00 +P0.50 +1.82%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P34.50 +P1.50 +4.55%	SM SM Investments Corp. P935.00 -P2.00 -0.21%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P103.50 -P0.50 -0.48%	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P33.20 +P0.75 +2.31%	TEL PLDT Inc. P1,285.00 -P1.00 -0.08%	URC Universal Robina Corp. P115.00 -P3.20 -2.71%	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P21.35 -P0.45 -2.06%

Alliance Global taps Meralco's MPower for RE

MANILA ELECTRIC Co. (Meralco) announced on Monday that its local retail electricity supplier MPower has signed a supply agreement with Tan-led Alliance Global Group, Inc. (AGI) for the provision of renewable energy (RE) to its businesses.

MPower will supply a total of 100 megawatts of renewable energy to AGI through Travelers International Hotel Group, Inc., the operator of Megaworld Corp. and Newport World Resorts, Meralco said in a statement on Monday.

"This partnership [with] MPower is a significant move towards AGI's goal of achieving carbon neutrality as it signals our full transition to tapping renewable energy sources for our

businesses," AGI Chief Executive Officer Kevin Andrew L. Tan said.

"Power consumption accounts for about 95% of AGI's carbon emissions from our day-to-day operations. Sourcing 95% of our energy requirement from renewable sources will significantly lessen our emissions from our operations," he added.

The partnership brings AGI "closer to its target" to source 100% of its power requirements from renewable energy by 2025, Meralco said.

Meanwhile, the subsidiaries of Meralco and Aboitiz Power Corp. (AboitizPower) have formed a joint venture that will serve as a vehicle to invest in the gas-fired power plants of San Miguel Global Power Holdings Corp. (SMGP).

Meralco PowerGen Corp. (MGen) and Therma NatGas Power, Inc. (TNGP) have jointly entered into an investment agreement to form Chromite Gas Holdings (CGHI).

"MGen will acquire 60% interest in CGHI while TNGP will acquire the balance of 40%," Meralco said in a stock exchange disclosure.

The company did not disclose the amount of the investment deal.

MGen is the power arm of Meralco while TNGP is a wholly owned subsidiary of AboitizPower through Therma Power, Inc.

SMGP announced over the weekend that it had signed a \$3.3-billion landmark deal with MGen and AboitizPower to launch an integrated liquefied natural gas facility in Batangas.

CGHI plans to invest in two gas-fired power plants owned by SMGP: the 1,278 megawatts (MW) Ilijan power plant and a new 1,320 MW combined power facility.

Together with SMGP, the joint venture company will also invest in liquefied natural gas (LNG) import and re-gasification terminal owned by Linseed Field Corp., a unit of Atlantic Gulf & Pacific Co.

REVIEW

Meanwhile, the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) has directed Meralco and the subsidiaries of First Gen Corp. to submit their respective documents and information for evaluating the fuel costs that the power distributor paid and passed on to consumers in February.

In an order dated Feb. 29, the ERC ordered Meralco, First Gas Power Corp. (FGPC), and FGP Corp. to submit the requirements on or before March 6.

This is in response to the urgent omnibus motion filed by Meralco on Feb. 19, seeking confirmation and approval of the costs related to LNG and Malampaya natural gas supply procured from First Gas power plants.

The documents directed to be submitted include those that will show that the "alternative fuel used by facilities was procured under competitive price and supply terms."

The ERC also requires them to submit copies of the fuel supply plan, old and new GSPA between First Gen subsidiaries and the

Malampaya consortium, fuel procurement plan, and relevant invoices relative to the LNG cargoes purchased, among others.

"Meralco, FGPC and FGP are hereby directed to submit their respective compliance pursuant to the foregoing directives via the official electronic mail address... within the aforementioned period," the commission said.

Meralco's controlling stakeholder, Beacon Electric Asset Holdings, Inc., is partly owned by PLDT Inc.

Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has an interest in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**

Ayala Land to open 2 more Vertis North buildings by 2027

LISTED property developer Ayala Land, Inc. (ALI) said it has started the construction of two new office buildings at Vertis North in Quezon City.

The two buildings, Vertis North Corporate Centers 4 and 5, are expected to be completed by 2027, ALI said in a regulatory filing on Monday.

The buildings will have a total of 82,000 square meters of gross leasable area and will join ALI's Vertis North Corporate Centers 1, 2, and 3 buildings.

The projects are expected to generate employment for over 17,000 Filipinos as these are expected to attract both multinational and local corporations, the company said.

"We hope that Vertis North Corporate Centers 4 and 5 will further contribute to Quezon City's already vibrant economy and provide even more employment opportunities to its young working population and new graduates," ALI President and Chief Executive Officer Anna Ma. Magarita B. Dy said.

"Vertis is a testament to ALI's unwavering commitment towards building centers of growth," she added.

Meanwhile, ALI said the expansion will uphold the Ayala brand of architecture and building systems while also being sustainable.

"The new structures will be built to meet the modern market demands, while exemplifying sustainable practices certified by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design and other green building certifications," the company said.

In 2023, ALI recorded a 32% increase in its full-year net income to P24.5 billion carried by strong property demand and consumer activity. The company's consolidated revenue jumped by 18% to P148.9 billion.

ALI shares rose by 0.29% or ten centavos to P34.90 each on Monday. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

AbaCore secures \$1.6-M investment from Singapore-based firm

LISTED holding firm AbaCore Capital Holdings, Inc. said it has secured \$1.6 million in additional investment from a Singapore-based investment company.

The Singaporean company bought \$1.6 million more in shares and plans to buy up to \$4 million worth, AbaCore said in a statement on Monday, without disclosing the company's name.

The investment fund is "long-term oriented" and focuses on businesses based in "emerging Asia," it added.

AbaCore said the transaction was brokered by Philippine boutique securities brokerage company WeCap Financial, Inc. and New York-based brokerage company and investment bank Auerbach Grayson & Co. (AGCO).

In 2022, WeCap and AGCO facilitated the purchase of AbaCore

shares by institutional asset managers based in North America and Europe, citing the Philippine listed company's undervalued stock relative to book value and expansion plans.

"We believe this investment in AbaCore's stock signifies positive sentiment the company is receiving from the market. WeCap is pleased to be given another opportunity to serve as a bridge for foreign

investors that want to benefit from AbaCore's solid financial results throughout the years," WeCap President Job Ambrosio said.

AbaCore is a conglomerate that has business interests in real estate, financial services, and tourism.

On Monday, AbaCore shares fell by 0.81% or one centavo to P1.23 per share. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Bangsamoro government suspends nickel firm's permit

THE Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources, and Energy (MENRE) of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao has canceled the mineral agreement of a nickel operation based in Tawi-Tawi.

In an order, MENRE said it canceled the mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) of Southern Nickel Corp.

MPSAs give concession holders exclusive rights to mine a defined area. In exchange, the local government receives a share of earnings from the mining operations.

Under its MPSA, Southern Nickel has a total contract area of 8,100 hectares divided into two parcels.

This includes 729 hectares for the first parcel and 7,371

hectares for the second, located within the municipalities of Languyan, Bongao, and Panglima Sugala in Tawi-Tawi.

Southern Nickel and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-ARMM executed the agreement in October 2007.

This covered the explorations, sustainable development, and com-

mercial utilization of nickel and other mineral deposits within the mining company's contract area.

The agency said that the MPSA may be terminated due to expiration, withdrawal of the contractor, violation of terms and conditions, failure to pay dues and financial obligations for two years, or though false statement or omission of facts. — **A.H. Halili**

Manila Harbor Center rebrands as Manila Multipurpose Terminal

MANILA HARBOR CENTER, a unit of Razon-led International Container Terminal Services, Inc. (ICTSI), has rebranded as Manila Multipurpose Terminal, citing its growth trajectory and alignment with the parent company.

"The rebranding is inspired by the company's steady growth and to underscore synergies with its owner and parent company," ICTSI said in a statement on Monday.

The terminal is a 13.2-hectare port facility at the Port of Manila, serving bulk, breakbulk, and other types of general cargo. It has a yearly capacity of 10 million metric tons, catering to several industries including construction, mining, power, telecommunications, manufacturing, and agriculture.

It is the largest and busiest international bulk and break bulk operations hub in the Philippines, the company said.

"Manila Multipurpose Terminal experienced a significant leap in productivity resulting from streamlined processes and new technologies," ICTSI said.

"ICTSI's global brand of port operation has enabled Manila Multipurpose Terminal to leverage new opportunities and navigate the shifting trends in global trade," it added.

In a related development, the company announced the completion of the phase 3A

expansion of its unit in Australia, the Victoria International Container Terminal (VICT).

With the expansion of VICT, supersized ships may now sail directly into Port Phillip and dock at VICT, the only terminal in Melbourne capable of receiving them, ICTSI said.

"This translates to faster turnaround times, improved efficiency, and ultimately, a competitive edge for Australian businesses," it added.

VICT's expansion, valued at P8.5 billion, is being carried out in two phases. The phase 3A was completed in December.

Phase 3A increases the terminal capacity by 30% to 1.25 million twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs), while Phase 3B is expected to be completed by 2026.

"VICT can now accommodate the largest container vessels calling Australia — the neo-Panamax giants — solidifying the Port of Melbourne's position as Australia's number one container port," Enrique K. Razon, chairman and president of ICTSI, said in a statement.

For 2023, ICTSI saw a 17.3% drop in its net income attributable to equity holders, falling to \$511.53 million from the previous \$618.46 million, attributed to the impairment cost associated with the acquisition of Pakistan International Container Terminal. — **Ashley Erika O. Jose**

Razon-led Bloomerry Resorts net income surges 85% to P9.5 billion

RAZON-LED BLOOMERRY Resorts Corp. announced on Monday an 85% growth in net income for 2023, reaching P9.5 billion compared to P5.1 billion the previous year.

Consolidated net revenue rose by 24% to P48.4 billion while consolidated earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) increased by 35% to P19.3 billion, Bloomerry said in a stock exchange disclosure on Monday.

"Driven by a strong domestic market, our annual EBITDA and net profit

grew by 35% and 85% year-over-year, respectively. Our mass table games, electronic gaming machines and non-gaming segments performed remarkably as revenues in these areas breached 2019 pre-pandemic levels by a significant margin," Bloomerry Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Enrique K. Razon, Jr. said.

Total gross gaming revenue (GGR) of Solaire Resort Entertainment City in Parañaque City rose by 16% to P58.3 billion led by domestic-focused mass tables

and electronic gaming machines (EGM) segments. Its total GGR in 2023 was 97% of pre-pandemic levels.

The GGR of Solaire's VIP, mass table, and EGM segments reached P19.5 billion, P18.2 billion, and P20.6 billion, representing an annual growth of 18%, 8%, and 22%, respectively.

"Solaire's VIP rolling chip volume, mass table drop, and slot coin-in were P616.4 billion, P51.2 billion, and P356.7 billion, representing year-over-year in-

creases of 28%, 35%, and 16%, respectively. All segments benefited from strong domestic demand and further improvements in international visitation," it said.

The GGR of Solaire Korea's Jeju Sun Hotel & Casino reached P31 million in 2023, a turnaround from the P8.5 million loss covering the Oct. 3 to Dec. 31, 2022 period.

In terms of non-gaming revenues, Bloomerry logged a 30% increase to P8.7 billion in 2023 from P6.7 billion in

2022. The 2023 figure reached 107% of their 2019 values.

Solaire's non-gaming revenue rose by 25% to P8.3 billion. Hotel occupancy grew to 79.8% from 53.7% in 2022.

Solaire Korea's non-gaming revenue rose to P357.3 million in 2023 from P48.7 million in 2022.

Mr. Razon said that Bloomerry is optimistic for 2024, citing the expected launch of Solaire Resort North in May. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**