

Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi)

6,872.24

▼69.97 PTS.

▼1%

MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2024

BusinessWorld

PSEI MEMBER STOCKS

AC Ayala Corp. P667.00 -P16.50 -2.41%	ACEN ACEN Corp. P4.05 -P0.03 -0.74%	AEV Aboitiz Equity Ventures, Inc. P48.65 -P0.65 -1.32%	AGI Alliance Global Group, Inc. P10.30 +P0.50 +5.1%	ALI Ayala Land, Inc. P32.30 -P0.90 -2.71%	BDO BDO Unibank, Inc. P155.30 -P1.70 -1.08%	BLOOM Bloomberg Resorts Corp. P11.40 ---	BPI Bank of the Philippine Islands P118.00 -P0.10 -0.08%	CNPF Century Pacific Food, Inc. P35.05 -P0.75 -2.09%	CNVRG Converge ICT Solutions, Inc. P8.55 -P0.25 -2.84%
DMC DMCI Holdings, Inc. P11.24 ---	EMI Emperador, Inc. P18.00 -P0.38 -2.07%	GLO Globe Telecom, Inc. P1,750.00 +P5.00 +0.29%	GTCAP GT Capital Holdings, Inc. P685.00 -P2.00 -0.29%	ICT International Container Terminal Services, Inc. P301.60 -P8.20 -2.65%	JFC Jollibee Foods Corp. P260.00 -P4.00 -1.52%	JGS JG Summit Holdings, Inc. P39.90 +P0.10 +0.25%	LTG LT Group, Inc. P9.70 +P0.21 +2.21%	MBT Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. P62.00 +P1.20 +1.97%	MER Manila Electric Co. P362.00 -P3.00 -0.82%
MONDE Monde Nissin Corp. P9.75 -P0.20 -2.01%	NIKL Nickel Asia Corp. P4.24 -P0.02 -0.47%	PGOLD Puregold Price Club, Inc. P27.10 -P0.40 -1.45%	SCC Semirara Mining and Power Corp. P34.20 +P0.20 +0.59%	SM SM Investments Corp. P983.50 +P4.00 +0.41%	SMC San Miguel Corp. P103.20 +P0.20 +0.19%	SMPH SM Prime Holdings, Inc. P31.60 -P1.20 -3.66%	TEL PLDT Inc. P1,317.00 +P17.00 +1.31%	URC Universal Robina Corp. P110.90 -P0.70 -0.63%	WLCON Wilcon Depot, Inc. P19.70 -P0.26 -1.3%

Premium Leisure Corp. plans to delist from PSE

INVESTMENT HOLDING company Premium Leisure Corp. (PLC) said it plans to voluntarily delist from the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE).

In a regulatory filing on Monday, PLC said the board of its parent firm Belle Corp. had approved the conduct of a tender offer for all of the former's outstanding common shares.

"The tender offer will be for the purpose of the voluntary delisting of PLC shares from the PSE," it said.

Belle Corp. has business interests in integrated resorts. It is one of the portfolio investments of Sy-led conglomerate SM Investments Corp.

PLC holds a stake in the City of Dreams Manila integrated entertainment and gaming complex in Parañaque City.

In a separate stock exchange disclosure, Belle Corp. said that it had engaged the First Metro Investment Corp. (FMIC) as an independent third party to conduct a valuation study and to issue a fairness opinion report.

"The tender offer price, timing, and other terms and conditions shall be determined and finalized upon receipt and acceptance by the board of directors of Belle Corp. of the fairness opinion report of FMIC; and the same shall be disclosed in due course," the company said.

The voluntary delisting announcement came more than a week after PLC announced a growth of 85% in net income to P2.32 billion last year due to higher gaming and lottery revenues, as well as improved mass and VIP operations at City of Dreams Manila.

PSE data showed that PLC has a public float level of 20.1%, slightly above the 20% requirement.

As of Monday, PLC has a market capitalization of P22.79 billion and has 31.22 billion outstanding shares.

The trading of PLC shares was suspended Monday afternoon and will resume trading

at 9 a.m. on Tuesday following the planned voluntary delisting announcement.

Aside from the City of Dreams complex, PLC also holds a 50.1% stake in listed Pacific Online Systems Corp., which leases online betting software and equipment to the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office for lottery operations in Visayas and Mindanao.

"This is a very sensible and astute move since the bulk of Belle's revenue is from City of Dreams Manila. As a result of the delisting, Belle Corp. will become the flagship gaming company of the SM Group," China Bank Capital Corp. Managing

Director Juan Paolo E. Colet said in a Viber message.

"The delisting should also boost Belle Corp.'s trading activity and liquidity as most investors who will exit PLC via the tender offer are very likely to shift to Belle," he added.

AP Securities, Inc. Senior Research Analyst Alfred Benjamin R. Garcia said in a separate Viber message that PLC's planned delisting could be to protect its financial strategies from competition or that the costs of being a listed company have already outweighed the benefits.

He added that the move could positively affect the stock per-

formance of other casino-related companies.

"Generally, it should be good for Bloomberg Resorts Corp. and to a certain extent for Digi-Plus Interactive Corp. and Pacific Online as the remaining gaming players in the Philippines," Mr. Garcia said.

"It should be good for Belle Corp. too, since it would now be the only vehicle if one wants to invest in the City of Dreams," he added.

On Monday, Belle Corp. shares rose by 50% or 64 centavos to P1.92 apiece while the last traded price of PLC stocks was at 74 centavos per share. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

LIMA Estate working on expansion of business hub

THE LIMA Estate in Lipa and Malvar, Batangas said, it is set to expand its business hub by 40 hectares in the first half, as part of its expansion plans, the Aboitiz group said on Monday.

The 40-hectare expansion will include commercial, retail, mixed-use, and residential spaces, Aboitiz InfraCapital, Inc. said in a statement.

LIMA Estate's business hub currently spans 30-hectares. It hosts The Outlets at Lipa outdoor mall that features 167 global and local brands.

The Outlets at Lipa saw a 27% growth in commercial spaces last year. It welcomed 30 new brands such as MR.DIY, PICKUP COFFEE, Cafe Mary Grace, and Nono's Restaurant.

For this year, the outdoor mall is expected to add brands such as Power Mac Center, Skechers USA, Mama Lou's Italian Kitchen, and the Happy Go Department Store.

"Our vision for LIMA is to create a dynamic, innovative, and socially responsible urban center that resonates with the lifestyles of Batangueños and those seeking an appealing alternative outside Metro Manila," Aboitiz InfraCapital Economic Estates Head Rafael Fernandez de Mesa said.

Aside from retail spaces, LIMA Estate's business hub also hosts cultural and sports events to foster community engagement.

Aboitiz InfraCapital said the launch of LIMA Tower One in the second quarter is

expected to support the needs of growing companies in information technology and business services.

LIMA Tower One offers seven stories of office spaces. It is the first of seven towers in the LIMA Office Park.

LIMA Estate is an 826-hectare economic zone registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority. It hosts 177 locators, a four-star hotel, a transportation hub, over 4,000 households, more than 66,000 employees, and various developments such as business process outsourcing companies, dormitories, schools, and other institutions. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Meralco unit pursues gas conversion project

MANILA ELECTRIC Co. (Meralco) is expecting to complete the conversion of its coal-fired power plant project in Quezon province into a gas-fired plant by 2029, the company's top official said.

"There's no clarity yet but the next window we're looking for Atimonan is by 2028, 2029," Meralco Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer Ronnie L. Aperocho said on the sidelines of a briefing last week.

Meralco Powergen Corp. (MGen), through its subsidiary Atimonan One Energy, Inc. (AIE), is working on the development of a 2,400-megawatt natural gas-

fired combined cycle gas turbine power plant project.

"Because of the coal moratorium, it does not make sense to build a new one," Mr. Aperocho said of the company's plan to pursue the conversion of the coal-fired power plant project.

In 2020, the Energy department issued a moratorium on the development of new coal-fired power plants.

Data from the Environmental Management Bureau showed that AIE is investing about P175 billion in the project, which is targeted for commercial operations by 2029.

The project includes building of an LNG storage unit, LNG unloading facility, and LNG re-gasification system.

LNG is also being put forward as a solution to the Philippines' looming power crisis.

Meralco said that local permits for the projects have already been secured and that the right-of-way acquisition is almost complete at 95%.

MGen has said that AIE has been certified by the Department of Energy as an energy project of national significance, allowing expedited permits and reviews by local and national government agencies.

JFC board OK's issuance of up to P8-B preferred shares

LISTED fastfood chain Jollibee Foods Corp. (JFC) said it is planning to raise up to P8 billion through a preferred shares offering, with a portion earmarked for repaying financial obligations.

The company's board approved the plan to offer and issue five million preferred shares with an oversubscription option of up to three million preferred shares at P1,000 apiece, JFC said in a stock exchange disclosure on Monday.

"These will be cumulative, nonvoting, nonparticipating, nonconvertible, redeemable, peso-denominated perpetual preferred shares," the company said.

"The dividend rate and other terms of the planned additional preferred shares will be deter-

mined at the time of pricing of the offering," it added.

The offer is still subject to approval by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and the Philippine Stock Exchange.

According to JFC, the funding transaction seeks to "maintain strong capital structure, robust leverage position, and optimize liquidity by managing maturities of financial obligations."

"A portion of the net proceeds from the offering will be used to refinance financial obligations including JFC's callable Series A Preferred Shares, which is due in October 2024 and for other general business purposes," it said.

The recently approved offering will be the second tranche

of JFC's 20 million preferred shares shelf registration approved by the SEC in September 2021.

"The second tranche preferred shares will come from the re-classification of the existing authorized and unissued common shares of JFC, thus not expanding the total number of authorized shares in its equity base," the company said.

"The preferred shares issuance will also not affect the current cash dividend policy and its implementation i.e., 33% of net income attributable to common equity holders of the parent company," it added.

BPI Capital Corp., Chinabank Capital Corp., and BDO Capital & Investment Corp. will be jointly underwriting the offer.

JFC operates 6,885 stores across the world as of end-2023, higher by 6.3% compared to the prior year.

Broken down, the company has 3,339 stores in the Philippines and 3,546 stores in other countries.

JFC's international stores include 567 in China, 389 in North America, 337 in Europe, Middle East, and Africa, 779 with Highlands Coffee mainly in Vietnam, 1,164 with Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf (CBTL), and 310 with Milksha.

The company's largest brands by store outlets worldwide are Jollibee at 1,660, CBTL at 1,164, Highlands Coffee at 779, Chowking at 613, and Mang Inasal at 573.

On Monday, JFC shares fell by 1.52% or P4 to P260 apiece. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Cityland says 50-storey condo tower to rise in Quezon City

LISTED property developer Cityland Development Corp. announced on Monday its City North Tower project along North Avenue in Quezon City.

"City North Tower... will rise in the bustling commercial and business district of Quezon City," the company said in a statement.

The 50-storey condominium project, which will be located across the future common station of Metro Rail Transit (MRT) Line 7, MRT 3, Light Rail Transit Line 1, and Metro Manila Subway, will have commercial, office, and residential units.

"It is just walking distance from Quezon City's biggest malls SM North EDSA and TriNoma, banks, restaurants, government offices, and other places of interest, thus making it an ideal place of total living comfort and convenience," Cityland said.

The City North Tower will have amenities such as swimming pool, multipurpose room with movable play set, gym, and viewing deck.

The project's residential segment will offer studio, one-bedroom, and two-bedroom units, the company said. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**