D&L Industries in talks for sustainable technology

LISTED D&L Industries, Inc. said it is in talks with several potential partners for the application of a new plant fiber-plastic technology that provides a sustainable alternative to plastics.

The technology, developed by D&L through its subsidiary D&L Polymer & Colours, Inc. (DLPC), will have a wide range of uses, from consumer durables to industrial applications in the construction and automotive industries, the company said.

DLPC is in talks with potential partners that are keen on using the technology to make their plastic products more sustainable.

While the company will initially use abaca fiber as the base material, the technology was also tested to use other locally available fibers such as pineapple, spider-lily or *bakong*, and vetiver.

"The Philippines has an endless supply of natural fibers that are mostly deemed as waste. About 25 years ago, even before the term sustainability became mainstream, we had already started exploring the possibilities of harnessing the potential of abaca fiber as an environmentally friendly complementary material or alternative to plastics," DLPC President and Chief Executive Officer Lester A. Lao said in a statement on Tuesday.

"What we have developed is a totally new material that is arguably breaking the boundaries of polymer science. With its unique characteristics and sustainable aspects, we are convinced that it has the potential to revolutionize the plastics industry," he added.

DLPC is currently in the sampling stage of the new plant fiber-plastics technology. Some of the sample finished products include vetiver and *bakong* chairs, vetiver crates, abaca floor mats, and abaca bins.

The fibers can help reduce plastic usage as they replace up to 40% of polymers in the formulation of different consumer and industrial products that are made of plastics.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lao said that DLPC is currently engaged in groundwork to make the technology available and used at scale.

"With the majority of the people in the industry not yet familiar with the technology and its potential applications, we believe that we are exploring uncharted territory with endless opportunities for innovators and pioneers like us. At this point, we believe that we are merely scratching the surface for a multitude of industries," Mr. Lao said.

D&L has business interests in product customization and specialization for the food, chemicals, plastics, and consumer products original design manufacturer industries.

It is engaged in the manufacturing of customized food ingredients, specialty raw materials for plastics, and oleochemicals for personal and home care use.

D&L shares rose by 0.5% or three centavos to P6 apiece on Tuesday. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Axelum Resources sees strong demand this year


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LISTED coconut food product manufacturer and exporter Axelum Resources Corp. is banking on strong demand to drive the company's growth this year.

The global coconut products industry is expected to see strong demand, upward pricing, and supply tightness this year based on independent publications, Axelum said in a regulatory filing on Tuesday.

This puts Axelum in a position to capitalize on the prevailing conditions amid supply volatility due to climate variability, it said.

"We have charted a clear path forward to expand our institutional business, while realizing the massive untapped potential of our consumer segment both domestically and overseas," Axelum Resources Corp. President and Chief Operating Officer Henry J. Raperoga said.

"Last year, we were focused on redefining plans, establishing new customer touchpoints, building strategic capabilities, and strengthening our overall distribution network. For 2025, we will concentrate resources on strategy execution and optimizing efficiencies across the business to maximize value generation," he added.

Axelum said it is on track to record all-time high shipped volumes for 2024, without providing specific figures.

"Following a sharp turnaround in 2024, Axelum is foreseeing record delivered volumes for most of its core product segments, primarily driven by rapidly-growing mainstream demand for plant-based eating, expanding commercial uses, innovative non-food applications, and other emerging market trends," the company said.

To date, Axelum has fully commissioned its new filling line to increase coconut water production by over 30% annually.

It also installed new equipment to boost manufacturing yields and finished the renovation of existing warehouses to increase storage capacity for finished goods.

Last year, the company signed a multi-year renewal agreement with coconut water brand Vita Coco. It also extended its sourcing areas to ensure raw material supply for its daily operational requirements.

"We have identified unique opportunities that will help propel us into a new era of growth in the long term," Mr. Raperoga said.

"As a company, we are positive that the current global macroeconomic backdrop will remain conducive and supportive of this ambition," he added.

For the first nine months, Axelum returned to profitability with a P339 million net income from the P428 million net loss in the same period last year.

January to September sales increased by 20% to P5.1 billion on higher volume in segments such as coconut powder, desiccated coconut, and coconut water.

Axelum shares fell by 0.95% or two centavos to P2.08 apiece on Tuesday. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Aboitiz Upgrade Solar, Republic Cement ink solar deal

ABOITIZ Upgrade Solar, Inc. (AUSI) has inked a long-term solar power purchase agreement with cement manufacturer Republic Cement & Building Materials, Inc. (RCBM) to power the latter's facility in Norzagaray, Bulacan.

Under the deal, AUSI will develop, build, and operate a ground-mounted solar project in RCBM's plant to allow RCBM to purchase clean energy.

The solar company will shoulder the upfront capital investment and the operations of the project and will exclusively sell the produced power to RCBM's cement plant. The ground-mounted solar project is slated for completion by the second half of 2025.

AUSI is a joint venture between listed energy company Aboitiz Power Corp. (AboitizPower) and solar project developer Upgrade Energy Philippines (UGEP).

"This project sets a new benchmark for solar adoption in the industrial sector," said AboitizPower First Vice-President and Head of Retail James Byron Yu.

"By bridging AUSI's expertise in delivering innovative energy solutions and Republic Cement's sustainability goals, we are creating a blueprint for how renewable energy solutions can power the Philippines' industrial future."

Roman Menz, chief executive officer of Republic Cement Services, underscored the importance of renewable energy for the cement industry, which he said is often recognized for its carbon-intensive operations.

"This partnership reflects Republic Cement's dedication to sustainability in terms of addressing the pressing need for cleaner energy solutions," said Mr. Menz. "By integrating solar energy into our operations, we take a decisive step toward reducing emissions and contributing to a more sustainable Philippines."

Founded in 1955, the Republic Cement Group has five plants and one grinding station, boasting a total cement capacity of 9.7 million tonnes per annum.

"AUSI, backed by the collaboration between AboitizPower and UGEP, is dedicated to offering sustainable and efficient energy solutions that address the energy needs of businesses while supporting the Philippines' transition to renewable energy," said AUSI Chairperson Ruth Yu-Owen.

AUSI develops, builds, and operates distributed solar solutions catered to large commercial and industrial consumers. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**