



Jollibee to issue \$300-M notes with 5.332% coupon

JOLLIBEE FOODS CORP. (JFC) has set the terms for its \$300-million note issuance, with the five-year senior unsecured notes carrying a fixed coupon rate of 5.332%.

The Regulation S notes will carry semi-annual interest payments, JFC said in a regulatory filing on Wednesday.

The company said the transaction had a final orderbook exceeding \$2 billion, equivalent to an oversubscription rate of seven times.

The notes will be issued by JFC's subsidiary, Jollibee Worldwide Pte. Ltd. (JWPL). The notes are unrated and will be listed on the Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Ltd.

"The significant investor demand played a key role in allowing JFC to tighten 35 basis points (bps) from initial price guidance, eventually landing at a spread of 125bps over the five-year US Treasury," JFC said.

"The notes offering is expected to settle on or about April 2, subject to the satisfaction of customary closing conditions," it added.

The company will use the proceeds for general corporate purposes and refinancing of JWPL's existing borrowings. Regulation S issuances are securities offered outside the United States that are not registered under the US Securities Act or any US state securities laws.

"This landmark transaction represents JFC's first return to the US dollar primary bond market since 2020. JFC is also the first Philippine corporate issuer to access the international bond market in 2025...," JFC said.

In a separate e-mail statement, financial research firm Credit-Sights said it sees little room for the new JFC issuance to tighten in the secondary market.

"We expect the new Jollibee bond to price close to where we see fair value, with little room for meaningful spread compression in the secondary market," it said.

JFC Chief Financial Officer Richard Shin said in a virtual media briefing on Tuesday that the company would convert the planned issuance to senior bonds from perpetual bonds.

"The reason for that is it's more cost effective as a senior bond versus a perpetual bond. Our covenants are all in a very good place. We want to do best for shareholders by getting the lowest cost," he said.

"This is our perpetual bond in the amount of \$396 million that was due in January... We've taken the \$96 million out of the \$396 million and we converted that into very favorable rate term (peso) loans onshore," he added.

JFC allotted a capital expenditure budget of P18 billion to P21 billion this year, which will be used to open up to 800 new stores.

As of end-2024, the fast-food giant has 9,766 stores globally, of which 3,382 are in the Philippines and 6,384 are international branches.

JFC shares rose by 0.34% or 80 centavos to P233.60 per share on Wednesday. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Moody's,
from SI/1

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) baseline forecast for inflation is at 3.5% for both 2025 to 2026. Accounting for risks, inflation could hit 3.7% in 2026.

Moody's Analytics Chief APAC Economist Steve Cochrane said central banks in the region will be able to further support their economy by reducing interest rates.

"It may be a very slow process, but there will be some continued normalization of rates going forward," he added.

The BSP last month opted to keep its key rate steady at 5.75% amid global trade uncertainties.

However, BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr. has said they are still on an easing cycle, signaling the possibility of a 25-basis-point (bp) cut at the Monetary Board's meeting on April 10.

Ms. Tan said they expect the BSP to cut by 50 bps to 5.25% by the end of 2025.

"As US tariffs could slow global demand and the pace of interest rate normalization, the Philippine central bank will be more cautious about monetary easing to avoid significant weakening of the peso," she said.

STRUCTURAL REFORMS

Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) separately said that Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, could stand to benefit from the "ambitious" reform packages.

"Countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam — the five largest emerging markets out of 10 economies in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) — could increase long-term real economic output," IMF economist Anne-Charlotte Paret Onorato said in a blog.

On average, the IMF said growth in these economies could increase by 1.5% to 2% after two years and even as high as by 3% after four years if "comprehensive and simultaneous economy-wide reform packages" are implemented.

These reforms not only support faster potential growth but also help economies attain higher income levels, it said.

"Wide-ranging reforms can build resilience to shocks in the face of uncertainties and help the private sector drive growth," it said, but noted these reforms often entail "substantial political economy challenges."

The main structural areas these economies must address include trade openness, the IMF said.

"While the six main ASEAN economies are generally more open than the average emerging market in the Group of 20, these countries still have more barriers to trade —and are relatively harder to trade with," Ms. Onorato said.

"Improving logistics and trade facilitation to make cross-border transactions faster, cheaper, and less uncertain would help the five largest ASEAN emerging market countries boost economic growth."

The multilateral institution also called for the need to address the "lagging services trade."

The Philippines' trade in services fell by 19.8% to \$14.58 billion in 2024 from \$18.18 billion in 2023, latest data from the central bank showed.

This as service exports rose by just 7.5% year on year to \$51.98 billion from \$48.33 billion compared with imports, which jumped by 24% to \$37.4 billion from \$30.15 billion.

This could help "maximize pro-competitive gains and technological spillovers, while creating high quality jobs," the IMF said.

"In fact, the transition to a more services-based economy by emerging markets does not mean that the scope for catching-up with advanced economies' income levels would be diminished — however, making the most of it requires facilitating the transition to highly productive services."

The IMF noted the need for high-quality education and more apt job-matching to enhance productivity.

ASEAN economies must also improve investment attractiveness and further boost financial inclusion, it added.

"On human development, it is striking that all major ASEAN emerging market countries enjoy a demographic advantage relative to benchmarks," Ms. Onorato said.

"In other words, they generally have relatively more people working than dependents (such as children and elderly individuals). Therefore, there is an opportunity to implement reforms now before aging populations increase fiscal burdens such as pensions and healthcare."

Moving forward, the IMF said deliberate and ambitious structural reform packages can help bolster sustainable and inclusive growth.

"A major simultaneous reform package improving business and external regulation, governance, and human development could raise output levels by up to 3% after four years. The benefits from enacting a single major economic reform would be more modest."

These reforms can also make economies more resilient amid external headwinds.

"Amid a shock-prone global environment, ambitious economy-wide structural reforms can also help build resilience by fostering diversified, broad-based, inclusive growth at the domestic level, and ensuring a credible and robust institutional framework to further unleash private sector-driven growth." — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

SEC says no filing yet on lower minimum public ownership rule

THE Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) said it has not received any formal proposal to reduce the minimum public ownership (MPO) requirement for large initial public offerings (IPOs).

"It didn't reach us. Once it reaches us, that's the time we will tell you. But for now, there's none," SEC Chairperson Emilio B. Aquino told reporters on the sidelines of the 2025 International Tax and Investment Conference hosted by the Asian Consulting Group in Pasay City on Wednesday.

"The issuer has to apply. But so far, there's no filing yet... They should go to us first," he added.

Mr. Aquino said any proposal to amend the MPO rule would undergo regulatory review, with the SEC evaluating multiple factors within a 45-day period before reaching a decision.

"There are different regulatory objectives in mind. One is to promote. As much as possible, we want to get more listings. But at the same time, we should also balance protection. There are many factors that we have to consider," he said.

Mr. Aquino's statement follows Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) President and Chief Executive Officer Ramon S. Monzon's announcement last week that the exchange had secured SEC approval to lower the MPO threshold, aiming to encourage more companies to proceed with public listings.

According to Mr. Monzon, IPO-bound companies may initially comply with a 15% public float, provided they commit to a follow-on offering or private placement within two to three years to meet the 20% MPO requirement.

He said the adjustment is temporary and will be reassessed.

"We have a two-year window, then if that's not working, we will extend it for another two years," Mr. Monzon said.

The PSE's initiative aligns with GCash's planned IPO later this year. GCash is controlled by Globe Fintech Innovations (Mynt).

Globe Telecom, Inc. President and Chief Executive Officer and Mynt Chairman Ernest L. Cu previously said the GCash IPO would partly depend on regulators allowing a reduced public float of 10-15% for larger offerings. He added that the IPO could target an \$8-billion valuation.

Mr. Monzon said GCash qualifies for the exemption as its IPO exceeds the P5-billion threshold.

The PSE anticipates six IPOs in 2025, though no listings have taken place so far.

Among the expected IPOs are Cebu-based fuel retailer Top Line Business Development Corp., GCash, and Pangilinan-led water concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Basic Energy secures approval for Cadiz solar power project

LISTED firm Basic Energy Corp. has obtained approval from the Department of Energy (DoE) to proceed with the pre-development phase of its proposed Cadiz 1 Solar Power Project in Negros Occidental.

In a stock exchange disclosure on Wednesday, Basic Energy said it received a certificate of authority from the DoE, allowing the company to secure the necessary permits and tenure instruments for the project.

The solar power facility will cover approximately 30 hectares and is expected to generate at least 43 megawatts (MW), based on a preliminary assessment by an independent third-party firm.

Following the approval, the company will proceed with key activities, including securing clearances from national agencies and local government units.

Basic Energy will also conduct a system impact study with the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines to ensure seamless grid integration.

"This milestone reinforces our commitment to expanding renewable energy solutions in the Philippines. Basic Energy Corporation is eager to advance the Cadiz 1 Solar Power Project and will provide updates as it progresses," said Basic Energy Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Oscar L. De Venecia, Jr.

The company previously disclosed that it had also received a certificate of authority for its solar power project in Mariveles, Bataan, with a potential capacity of 62 MW.

These initiatives are part of Basic Energy's strategy to develop a 500-MW solar energy portfolio by 2030, alongside its target of 500 MW in wind energy generation.

At the local bourse on Wednesday, shares of the company declined by 0.81% to close at P0.12 each. — **Sheldeen Joy Talavera**



PHILIPPINE STAR FILE PHOTO

FILINVEST LAND, INC.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Stockholders' Meeting of **FILINVEST LAND, INC.** ("FLI", the "Corporation" or the "Company") will be conducted virtually on **24 April 2025 (Thursday)** at **3:00 p.m.**, at which meeting the following matters shall be taken up:

- Call to Order
- Proof of Notice of Meeting
- Certification of Quorum
- Approval of the Minutes of the Annual Stockholders' Meeting held on 19 April 2024
- Presentation of the Management Report
- Ratification of the Audited Financial Statements for the year ended 31 December 2024
- Ratification of the Acts and Resolutions of the Board of Directors, Board Committees and Management from the Date of the Last Annual Stockholders' Meeting up to 24 April 2025
- Election of the Members of the Board of Directors, including three (3) Independent Directors, to serve for 2025-2026
- Appointment of the External Auditor
- Other Matters
- Adjournment

Pursuant to the provisions of the Company's Amended By-Laws, the Board of Directors during its meeting held on 24 January 2025 resolved that the Annual Stockholders' Meeting be held in a virtual format. As such, the stockholders may attend the said meeting only by remote communication, by voting in absentia or through proxy.

Only Stockholders of Record as of 5:00 PM of 28 February 2025 shall be entitled to vote at this meeting. Votes cast remotely or in absentia should be received by the Corporation on or before 14 April 2025.

Stockholders who wish to vote by proxy shall submit the same on or before 14 April 2025 to the Office of the Corporate Secretary, located at the Filinvest Building, 79 EDSA, Highway Hills, Mandaluyong City 1550, Metro Manila, or by email to FLIASM@filinvestland.com.

A proxy submitted by a corporation should be accompanied by a Corporate Secretary's Certificate quoting the board resolution designating a corporate officer to execute the proxy. In addition to the above requirement for corporations, a proxy form given by a broker or custodian bank in respect of shares of stock carried by such broker or custodian bank for the account of the beneficial owner must be accompanied by a certification under oath stating that the broker or custodian bank has obtained the written consent of the account holder.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE CORPORATION IS NOT SOLICITING PROXIES.

The Corporation's Information Statement, Management Report, and 2024 Audited Financial Statements will be made available in the Company's website at <https://www.filinvestland.com> and in the Philippine Stock Exchange EDGE disclosure system no later than 28 March 2025.

Please be guided accordingly.

(Sgd.)
KATRINA O. CLEMENTE-LUA
Corporate Secretary

¹Should the date of Annual Stockholders' Meeting ("ASM") be declared a legal holiday, the ASM will be held on the next succeeding business day, at the same time (3:00p.m.)