

STOCK MARKET	ASIAN MARKETS	WORLD MARKETS	PESO-DOLLAR RATES	ASIAN MONIES-US\$ RATE	WORLD CURRENCIES	DUBAI CRUDE OIL
PSEI OPEN: 7,330.44 HIGH: 7,372.25 LOW: 7,257.43 CLOSE: 7,372.25 VOL.: 1.402 B 30 DAYS TO FEBRUARY 21, 2022 VAL(P): 9.114 B	FEBRUARY 21, 2022 JAPAN (Nikkei 225) 26,910.87 ▼ -211.20 -0.78 HONG KONG (Hang Seng) 24,170.07 ▼ -157.64 -0.65 TAIWAN (Weighted) 18,221.49 ▼ -10.86 -0.06 THAILAND (SET Index) 1,694.68 ▼ -18.52 -1.08 S. KOREA (KSE Composite) 2,743.80 ▼ -0.72 -0.03 SINGAPORE (Straits Times) 3,436.36 ▲ 7.46 0.22 SYDNEY (All Ordinaries) 7,233.60 ▲ 11.90 0.16 MALAYSIA (KLC Composite) 1,582.69 ▼ -20.36 -1.27	FEBRUARY 18, 2022 Dow Jones 34,079.180 ▼ -232.850 NASDAQ 13,548.066 ▼ -168.653 S&P 500 4,348.870 ▼ -31.390 FTSE 100 7,513.620 ▼ -23.750 Euro Stoxx50 3,714.540 ▼ -21.130	FX OPEN P51.400 HIGH P51.360 LOW P51.420 CLOSE P51.380 W.AVE. P51.393 VOL. \$713.50 M SOURCE : BAP	FEBRUARY 21, 2022 LATEST BID (0900GMT) PREVIOUS JAPAN (YEN) 114.880 ▲ 115.000 HONG KONG (HK DOLLAR) 7.802 ▲ 7.800 TAIWAN (NT DOLLAR) 27.796 ▲ 27.840 THAILAND (BAHT) 32.110 ▲ 32.150 S. KOREA (WON) 1,190.440 ▲ 1,195.000 SINGAPORE (DOLLAR) 1.345 ▲ 1.346 INDONESIA (RUPIAH) 14,325 ▲ 14,325 MALAYSIA (RINGGIT) 4.177 ▲ 4.184	FEBRUARY 21, 2022 US\$/UK POUND 1.3635 ▲ 1.3590 US\$/EURO 1.1367 ▲ 1.1321 \$/AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR 0.7215 ▲ 0.7173 CANADA DOLLAR/US\$ 1.2729 ▲ 1.2749 SWISS FRANC/US\$ 0.9185 ▼ 0.9215	FUTURES PRICE ON NEAREST MONTH OF FEBRUARY \$90.31/BBL \$1.56 30 DAYS TO FEBRUARY 18, 2022

VOL. XXXV • ISSUE 151 TUESDAY • FEBRUARY 22, 2022 • www.bworldonline.com S1/1-10 • 2 SECTIONS, 14 PAGES

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE'S 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS BY VALUE TURNOVER • FEBRUARY 21, 2022 (PSEI snapshot on S1/2; article on S2/2)

SM	P860.000	SPNEC	P1.860	SMPH	P39.900	ALI	P39.700	DITO	P6.610	BDO	P135.000	MONDE	P15.520	GLO	P2,700.000	CNVRG	P26.900	TEL	P1,782.000
Value	P1,366,423,960	Value	P1,019,222,470	Value	P502,932,805	Value	P476,773,335	Value	P431,108,266	Value	P334,415,301	Value	P292,803,698	Value	P259,373,710	Value	P219,305,915	Value	P178,944,610
	-P61.000 ▼ -6.623%		-P0.190 ▼ -9.268%		P1.700 ▲ 4.450%		P0.050 ▲ 0.126%		P0.810 ▲ 13.966%		P0.500 ▲ 0.372%		-P0.540 ▼ -3.362%		P0.000 — 0.000%		-P0.900 ▼ -3.237%		P0.000 — 0.000%

BSP has room to keep policy rates low

BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Benjamin E. Diokno said there is "room to maneuver" on monetary policy amid manageable inflation and the improving economy.

"We have decided to wait a little bit... I think we still have

room to maneuver because the inflation outlook looks good and of course, growth also is picking up and unemployment is going down," he told Bloomberg Television.

"We'll wait until [we see] what happens in the US and

the extent to which they will tighten [rates]," he added, referring to the anticipated rate hike by the Federal Reserve starting March.

The Monetary Board kept the key policy rate at a record low of 2% on Thursday, as widely

expected, to support economic growth amid uncertainty over the pandemic.

The BSP also raised its inflation forecast for 2022 to 3.7% from 3.2%, though still within its 2-4% target and slower than 4.5% in 2021.

Mr. Diokno said there are signs of improvement in the economy as seen in three consecutive quarters of growth and the lower unemployment rate.

The economy grew by 7.7% in the fourth quarter. This brought annual growth to 5.6%, a rever-

sal from the record 9.6% contraction in 2020.

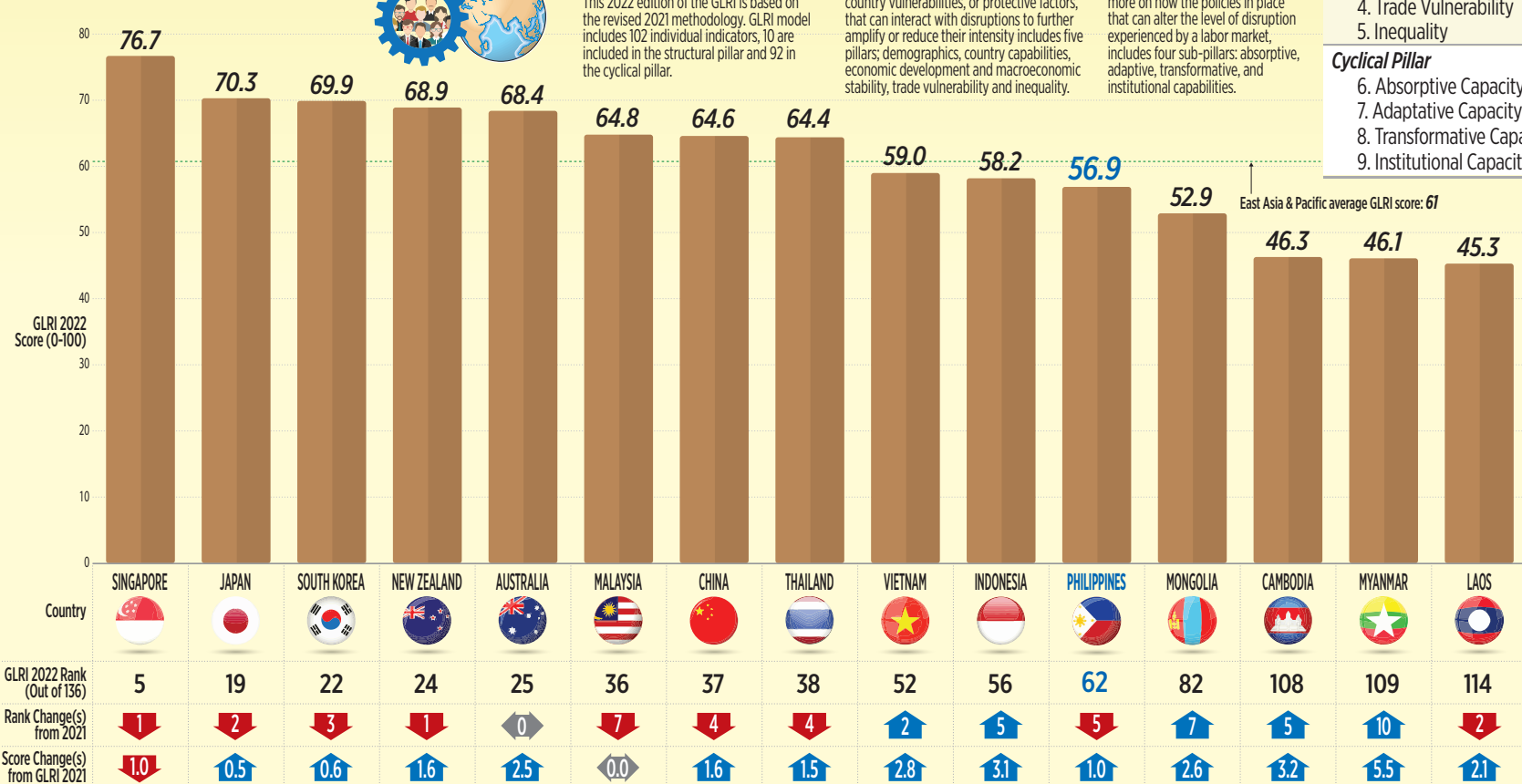
"Our GDP (gross domestic product) grew in the last three quarters, so we have two more quarters to look at. So, we're just right where we want to be," he said.

BSP, S1/2

PHILIPPINES SLIPS IN LABOR RESILIENCE RANKING

Global strategy and public policy advisory firm Whiteshield Partners' Global Labor Resilience Index (GLRI) assesses the countries on the resilience of their labor market in withstanding shocks such as geopolitical tensions, policy changes, and technological innovations. The index is structured around two pillars: the structural pillar (demographics, level of economic development, country capabilities, economic diversification, and inequality) and the cyclical pillar (absorptive, adaptive, transformative, and institutional capabilities). In the 2022 edition of the index, the Philippines drops five notches to 62nd out of 136 countries, with an overall resilience score of 56.9, below East Asia and Pacific's average score of 61.

East Asia and Pacific



Philippines' Profile 2022

Rank (Out of 136)	Score	Score Change(s) from 2021
Overall GLRI Score (0-100)	56.9	
Structural Pillar	67.2	▲ 2.6
1. Demographics	84.4	▼ 0.2
2. Country Capabilities	74.9	▲ 17.5
3. Economic Development and Macroeconomic Stability	73.7	▲ 1.8
4. Trade Vulnerability	54.2	▲ 0.1
5. Inequality	53.9	▼ 7.0
Cyclical Pillar	51.8	▲ 0.2
6. Absorptive Capacity	53.2	▼ 0.9
7. Adaptive Capacity	46.4	▼ 1.0
8. Transformative Capacity	45.7	▲ 1.3
9. Institutional Capacity - Cross-cutting Driver	61.0	▲ 2.0

Top 5

Country	GLRI 2022 Rank (Out of 136)	Rank Change(s) from 2021	GLRI 2022 Score (0-100)	Score Change(s) from GLRI 2021
Denmark	1	▲ 4	79.0	▲ 2.4
Switzerland	2	▼ 1	78.7	▼ 0.1
Germany	3	▼ 1	78.2	▼ 0.1
Netherlands	4	▼ 1	78.1	▼ 0.1
Singapore	5	▼ 1	76.7	▼ 1.0

Bottom 5

Country	GLRI 2022 Rank (Out of 136)	Rank Change(s) from 2021	GLRI 2022 Score (0-100)	Score Change(s) from GLRI 2021
Chad	136	▲ 0	29.9	▼ 0.3
Yemen	135	▲ 0	32.8	▲ 2.2
Angola	134	▼ 1	34.0	▼ 0.2
Haiti	133	▲ 1	37.2	▲ 3.4
Burundi	132	▼ 3	37.7	▼ 1.0

SOURCE: WHITESHIELD PARTNERS' GLOBAL LABOR RESILIENCE INDEX 2022 (HTTPS://WWW.WHITESHIELDPARTNERS.COM/INSIGHTS/GLRI_REPORT_2022)
 BUSINESSWORLD RESEARCH: ANA OLIVIA A. TIRONA and ABIGAIL MARIE P. YRAOLA
 BUSINESSWORLD GRAPHICS: BONG R. FORTIN

Business leaders back NCR's shift to most relaxed alert level

LOCAL BUSINESS LEADERS said the Philippine capital region should be placed under the most relaxed alert level soon to allow businesses to fully reopen and help in the economy's recovery from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Alert Level 1 should be enforced in the National Capital Region (NCR), Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) President George T. Barcelon told an online news briefing on Monday, adding that easing restrictions must be supported by increased public transport capacity.

"We are in favor of lowering down the alert level, but cognizant of the fact that the virus is still around. So, what's important is the mobility side of it — for the commuter," he said.

"Once we go down to Alert Level 1, there will be more people working. The retail establishments will be patronized by more people going to the malls. It entails people commuting and that is one factor that the government has to look into to make sure that there is enough public transportation," he added.

Malacañang has kept NCR under Alert Level 2 until Feb. 28. More business establishments may increase operating capacities from 50% to 70% depending on whether activities are indoors or outdoors.

Once the government approves the shift to Alert Level 1, businesses may operate at 100% capacity as long as minimum public health standards are followed.

Henry Lim Bon Liong, Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Com-

merce and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCII) president, said the country still needs to be cautious amid efforts to reopen the economy.

"There is no businessman that will not support Alert Level 1. In fact, I think that without even doing anything, the government would really lift the Alert Level 2 already as early as the end of February. By March, we should see Alert Level 1 already," he said.

"We still have to be cautious, but at least not overcautious that it will really affect our economy," he added.

The Health department reported 1,427 COVID-19 infections on Monday, bringing the active caseload to 58,657.

Meanwhile, Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship Jose Ma. "Joey" A. Concepcion III said the country needs to open all businesses to boost economic recovery.

"Open up everything. Open up the casinos. Open up every business out there that remains closed. That is very important. We have a lot of catching up to do," he said.

"This March, we move down to Alert Level 1. All businesses, hopefully open. Capacities for restaurants move up to 100%. And even for call centers and business process outsourcing, we have to allow more capacity in these because they become more viable and more competitive as we compete in that market," he added.

The Philippine economy grew by 5.6% in 2021, a reversal from the 9.6% contraction in 2020. The government is targeting 7-9% gross domestic product growth this year. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochoa**

FUEL PRICE TRACKER

(week-on-week change)

Fuel Type	Feb. 8	Feb. 15	Feb. 22
GASOLINE	P1.05	P1.20	P0.80
DIESEL	P1.20	P1.05	P0.65
KEROSENE	P1.25	P0.65	P0.45

- Feb. 22, 12:01 a.m. — Caltex Philippines
- Feb. 22, 6 a.m. — Petron Corp.; Phoenix Petroleum; Philipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.; PTT Philippines Corp.; Seaoil Philippines, Inc.
- Feb. 22, 8:01 a.m. — Cleanfuel (Shaw Autogas, Inc.)

WHAT'S INSIDE

PROPERTY & INFRASTRUCTURE
 Is the leisure sector ripe for a rebound?
 S1/5

THE NATION
 Philippines posts 1,427 cases, lowest this year
 S1/10

A NEWSPAPER IS A PUBLIC TRUST

FOLLOW US ON:
 facebook.com/bworldph
 twitter.com/bworldph
 anchor.fm/businessworld

Philippines faces risks from mounting debt — analysts

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY may face risks from mounting debt amid impending global monetary policy tightening, analysts said.

"If your debt is growing, then you're vulnerable to rising interest rates, which might happen in the near future, because the US might reverse its current, easy monetary policy stance," University of the Philippines School of Economics professor Renato E. Reside, Jr. said at an online webinar on Monday.

The US Federal Reserve has signaled it might start raising rates from near zero as early as March.

Outstanding debt last year swelled by P2 trillion or by 20% year on year to P11.73 trillion, based on data from the Bureau of the Treasury.

The country's debt-to-gross domestic product (GDP) ratio soared to a 16-year high of 60.5% last year as the government borrowed more to finance its pandemic response. This was already beyond the 60% threshold considered manageable by multilateral lenders for developing economies.

Mr. Reside said the depreciation of the peso could also be a fiscal risk considering the country's external debt. Outstanding foreign borrowings increased by 14.8% year on year to P3.56 trillion last year.

Rene E. Ofreneo, professor emeritus at the UP School of Labor and Industrial Relations, also expressed concern over the rising debt, noting government debt service could reach about P2 trillion a year on a debt-to-GDP ratio of 60%.

"Our debt is so big but it seems like we lack transparency," he told the same forum in Filipino.

Mr. Ofreneo said the government should adopt a just debt policy that will involve a more thorough audit of borrowings.

The country's budget deficit had risen by 24.63% to P1.33 trillion in the 11 months to November from a year earlier.

Amid the rising debt, Mr. Reside is hoping policy makers would focus on measures that could help drive growth. He said the next administration should prioritize public investments in the most productive sectors like infrastructure, health and education.

"The more rapid the growth, the more the increase in debt can be contained," he said.

This year, the government expects the economy to grow by 7-9% following the 5.6% expansion in 2020 and the record 9.6% contraction in 2020.

Meanwhile, Trade Undersecretary Rafaelita Aldaba said the country needs more investments in digital transformation and human resource development to help drive post-pandemic economic growth.

"We want more investments on digital transformation, more research and development along with human resource development to help us in terms of building new and future skills of our workforce. These policies will be important for us to increase our productivity," she said. — **L.W.T. Noble**