



BusinessWorld

STOCK MARKET	ASIAN MARKETS	WORLD MARKETS	PESO-DOLLAR RATES	ASIAN MONIES-US\$ RATE	WORLD CURRENCIES	DUBAI CRUDE OIL
PSEI OPEN: 6,940.85 HIGH: 7,008.94 LOW: 6,900.49 CLOSE: 7,008.94 VOL: 1.109 B VAL(P): 6.671 B 52.34 Pts. 0.75% 30 DAYS TO MARCH 22, 2022	MARCH 22, 2022 JAPAN (NIKKEI 225) 27,224.11 ▲ 396.68 1.48 HONG KONG (HANG SENG) 21,889.28 ▲ 667.94 3.15 TAIWAN (TAIEX) 17,559.71 ▲ -0.65 0.00 THAILAND (SET INDEX) 1,678.35 ▲ 4.48 0.27 S. KOREA (KOSPI) 2,710.00 ▲ 23.95 0.89 SINGAPORE (STRAITS TIMES) 3,351.97 ▲ -3.54 -0.11 SYDNEY (ALL ORDINARIES) 7,341.10 ▲ 62.60 0.86 MALAYSIA (KLCSE COMPOSITE) 1,585.81 ▲ -1.35 -0.09	MARCH 21, 2022 Dow Jones 34,552.990 ▼ -201.940 NASDAQ 13,838.460 ▼ -55.377 S&P 500 4,461.180 ▼ -1.940 FTSE 100 7,442.390 ▲ 37.660 Euro Stoxx50 3,673.800 ▲ 6.580	FX OPEN P52.440 HIGH P52.385 LOW P52.470 CLOSE P52.440 W.AVE. P52.427 VOL. \$953.10 M SOURCE : BAP 9.00 CTVS 30 DAYS TO MARCH 22, 2022	MARCH 22, 2022 LATEST BID (0900GMT) PREVIOUS JAPAN (YEN) 120.650 ▼ 119.220 HONG KONG (HK DOLLAR) 7.827 ▼ 7.825 TAIWAN (NT DOLLAR) 28.547 ▼ 28.502 THAILAND (BAHT) 33.490 ▲ 33.510 S. KOREA (WON) 1,217.870 ▼ 1,213.770 SINGAPORE (DOLLAR) 1.358 ▼ 1.355 INDONESIA (RUPIAH) 14,356 ▼ 14,338 MALAYSIA (RINGGIT) 4.215 ▼ 4.203	MARCH 22, 2022 US\$/UK POUND 1.3186 ▲ 1.3149 US\$/EURO 1.1003 ▲ 1.1058 \$/AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR 0.7412 ▲ 0.7389 CANADA DOLLAR/US\$ 1.2614 ▲ 1.2600 SWISS FRANC/US\$ 0.9348 ▲ 0.9306	DUBAI CRUDE OIL FUTURES PRICE ON NEAREST MONTH OF DELIVERY \$109.75/BBL 30 DAYS TO MARCH 21, 2022

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE'S 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS BY VALUE TURNOVER • MARCH 22, 2022 (PSEi snapshot on S1/2; article on S2/2)

SM	P882.000	ICT	P227.800	JFC	P205.000	MER	P369.800	MONDE	P13.480	AC	P777.000	SMPH	P39.050	ALI	P34.950	BDO	P130.400	AEV	P57.000
Value	P421,449,900	Value	P419,902,764	Value	P399,519,974	Value	P322,667,572	Value	P315,325,272	Value	P226,753,635	Value	P215,198,365	Value	P213,591,870	Value	P211,031,609	Value	P209,172,719
P2.000	▲ 0.227%	P7.600	▲ 3.451%	-P7.000	▼ -3.302%	P10.800	▲ 3.008%	-P0.220	▼ -1.606%	P0.000	— 0.000%	P0.200	▲ 0.515%	P0.250	▲ 0.720%	P4.300	▲ 3.410%	-P0.500	▼ -0.870%

PHL raises \$2.25B via offshore bonds

THE PHILIPPINES raised \$2.25 billion from its first triple tranche US dollar-denominated bond offering, which included its first-ever green bonds, despite heightened market volatility from the Russia-Ukraine crisis and the start of the US Federal Reserve's policy tightening cycle.

In a statement on Tuesday, the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr)

said it raised \$1 billion from the inaugural 25-year green bond offer, as well as \$500 million from five-year bonds, and \$750 million from 10.5-year bonds.

The Treasury said the new five-year global bonds were priced at 90 basis points (bps) over Treasuries or a coupon of 3.229%. This was after the initial

price guidance of 125 bps over the Treasuries area.

The 10.5-year bonds were priced at 3.556% or 125 bps over Treasuries, after the initial guidance of 165 bps over the Treasuries. The 25-year notes were priced at 4.2%, 50 bps tighter than the initial guidance of 4.7%.

"After a few weeks of volatility in the global equity and credit markets, the Republic was able to take advantage of the improving market sentiment (after the March FOMC (Federal Open Market Committee) meeting," the BTr said.

The US Federal Reserve last week raised rates by a quarter per-

centage point, the first time since 2018, to help combat soaring inflation.

The BTr said proceeds from the shorter-term tenors will be used for budget financing, while those from the 25-year global bonds will be used for the government's sustainable finance program.

"The fact that our debut sustainability bond tranche secured the strongest demand among the three tranches highlights the strong investor confidence in the National Government's commitment to achieving sustainable development and mitigating climate change, notably the Bonds, S1/10

Taxi operators seek P20 hike in flag-down rate in NCR

By Arjay L. Balinbin
Senior Reporter

TAXI OPERATORS in Metro Manila will ask the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) to allow them to increase the flag-down rate to P60 from the current P40, as drivers struggle to make ends meet due to rising fuel prices.

"They (taxi operators and drivers) want an increase of P20 to the current P40 flag-down rate," said Jesus Manuel C. Suntay, president of the Philippine National Taxi Operators Association (PNTOA) and Quezon City congressman.

The petition will be filed by PNTOA "within this week," he told *BusinessWorld* in a phone interview on Monday.

Fuel retailers on Tuesday slashed gasoline and diesel prices by P5.45 and P11.45 per liter, respectively, putting an end to 11 consecutive weeks of steadily increasing pump prices.

However, Mr. Suntay said the Tuesday rollback was not commensurate with the pump price increase implemented the previous week. Last week, fuel retailers raised gasoline and diesel prices by P7.10 and P13.15 per liter, respectively.

"If you look at it, since December, I think the increase has reached P24," he added.

Mr. Suntay said taxi operators decided to seek a P20 increase in the flag-down rate, since it was the amount that "would have the lowest impact on the riding public while benefiting our drivers."

According to data from the LTFRB, the number of active taxis plunged to 27,934 units as of October 2021 from the 50,059 taxis before the strict lockdown was implemented to curb the coronavirus outbreak in mid-March 2020.

As of now, Mr. Suntay estimated there are only around 16,000 active taxis in Metro Manila. "Many fleet operators sold their units due to pandemic restrictions and driver shortage."

The government currently has a P2.5-billion fuel subsidy program for public utility vehicle operators and drivers. Another P2.5-billion budget is being prepared for the program, according to the Budget department. The program aims to support a total of 377,443 beneficiaries.

The LTFRB reported on Tuesday that more than 108,000 beneficiaries had received their P6,500 fuel subsidy.

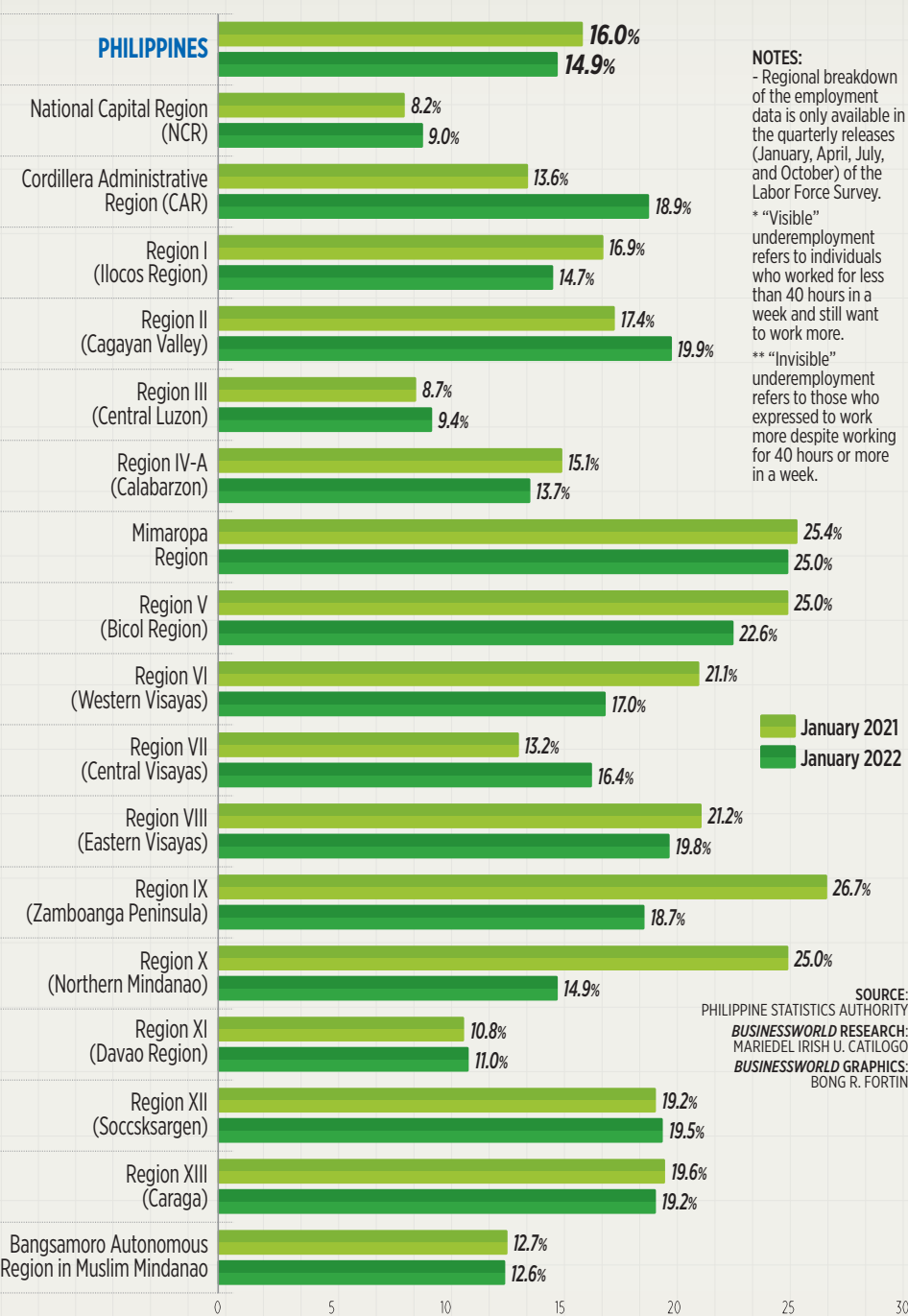
Mr. Suntay said the subsidy distribution is "too slow."

"The excise tax imposed on fuel products should be suspended. We believe that's the fastest way to help the motorists," he added.

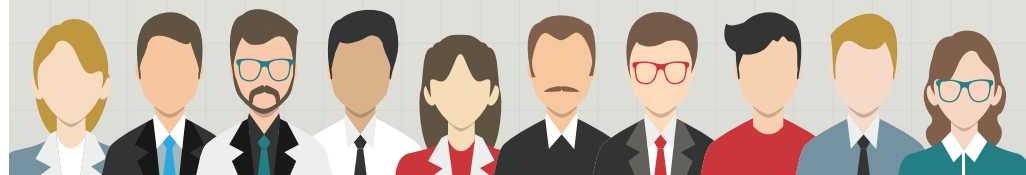
The LTFRB is also hearing fare hike petitions from various jeepney and transport network vehicle service groups. It recently denied a petition to restore the minimum jeepney fare to P10 from P9. The petitioners filed a motion for reconsideration on Monday.

JOB QUALITY IMPROVES YEAR ON YEAR IN JANUARY

The underemployment rate is defined as the share of employed persons who want more work or longer hours to the total labor force. The country's latest labor force survey released on March 18 showed 6.397 million underemployed Filipinos in January, down by 192,000 from 6.589 million in January last year. On a monthly basis, it was down by 414,000 from 6.811 million in December. This brought the underemployment rate to 14.9% that month, slightly worse than 14.7% in December but an improvement from 16% a year ago. The year-on-year net decrease in January was due to lower "visible" underemployment.* Of the 17 regions, 10 saw their respective underemployment rate improve from the previous year. Northern Mindanao recorded the biggest decrease with 10.1 percentage points (ppts) to 14.9% from 25%. This was followed by the Zamboanga Peninsula (7.9 ppts) and the Western Visayas (4.2 ppts).



Share of Underemployment by Sector	January 2021	December 2021	January 2022
Agriculture	33.0%	33.3%	31.2%
Industry	19.0%	19.9%	19.6%
Services	48.1%	46.7%	49.2%
Underemployed (in million)	6.589	6.811	6.397
Underemployment Rate	16.0%	14.7%	14.9%
Visibly Underemployed (in million)*	4.531	4.556	3.848
Visible Underemployment Rate*	11.0%	9.8%	8.9%
Invisibly Underemployed (in million)**	2.058	2.255	2.548
Invisible Underemployment Rate**	5.0%	4.9%	5.9%



Higher energy costs to weigh on PHL growth

THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMY'S recovery this year may face risks arising from higher energy costs and the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) said Philippine gross domestic product (GDP) will likely expand by 7% this year, driven by infrastructure spending and remittances. The OECD released its Economic Outlook for Southeast Asia, China, and India 2022 report on Tuesday.

"Faster implementation of investment projects in infrastructure, plus the recovery in cash remittances by overseas Filipino workers constitute upside factors to the forecast," Kensuke Tanaka, OECD Development Centre Asia head of unit, said in an e-mailed response to questions.

"Pandemic-related uncertainties as infections due to the Omicron variant remain elevated continue to pose downside risks to the forecast," he added.

The government allocated P1.18 trillion for its infrastructure program this year, or the equivalent of 5.3% of GDP.

The central bank expects remittances to grow by 4% this year. In January, cash remittances went up by 2.5% year on year to \$2.668 billion.

"The war in Ukraine is anticipated to affect the Philippines through higher prices for oil, natural gas, but also through higher food prices," Mr. Tanaka said.

The OECD's GDP estimate for the Philippines is at the lower end of the government's 7-9% growth forecast for 2022. The forecast is also higher than the OECD's 5.8% average growth seen for emerging Asia this year.

The Philippine economy accelerated by 5.6% last year following a record 9.6% contraction in 2020.

The OECD expects the Philippines to post a 6.1% GDP growth next year, still higher than the 5.2% it estimates for emerging Asia in 2023.

LOWER FORECAST

On the other hand, Citigroup, Inc. lowered its GDP forecast for the Philippines this year to 6.5%, down from its previous 6.8% estimate.

"[R]ecent increases in commodity prices, especially energy, will still weigh on consumer confidence and household consumption, especially with a lack of energy subsidies at this juncture and weak income growth," Citi economist for the Philippines Nalin Chuchotitham said in a report.

Household spending makes up more than three-fourths of the Philippine GDP. It expanded by 4.2% in 2021 from a decline of 7.9% in 2020.

Ms. Chuchotitham said their estimates show GDP growth could be slashed by around 0.07 percentage point in a scenario where crude oil will increase by around 11%.

Citi revised its average Brent crude price forecast for this year to \$91 a barrel as of March 7, from \$79 a barrel as of Feb. 25. Oil prices are seen to go up to \$102 a barrel in the second quarter, before falling to \$79 in the fourth quarter.

Energy, S1/10

BUSINESSWORLD B-SIDE

Votes for sale

VOTE BUYING is prohibited under the Omnibus Election Code, with penalties of imprisonment for one to six years, disqualification to hold public office, and forfeiture of one's right to vote if found guilty.

And yet, vote buying still happens.

In this B-Side episode, Froilan C. Calilung, a political science professor

at the University of Santo Tomas, talks about the legalities and loopholes that have allowed vote buying to become part of the Philippine political system, with structures built by those with power and money. "We could simply say that poverty is one of the contentious issues why we have vote buying, and why it is still very much prevalent in our society nowadays," he tells *BusinessWorld* reporter Alyssa Nicole O. Tan. "Many Filipinos actually see election time as a frivolous event — more like a carnival of sorts, if I may say."

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CORPORATE NEWS
North Star files P4.5-billion IPO S1/3

HEALTH
PGH proposes construction of cancer center for the poor S1/9

ARTS & LEISURE
What to see at Art Fair PH's physical exhibits S2/4



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