

STOCK MARKET	ASIAN MARKETS	WORLD MARKETS	PESO-DOLLAR RATES	ASIAN MONIES-US\$ RATE	WORLD CURRENCIES	DUBAI CRUDE OIL
PSEi OPEN: 6,757.95 HIGH: 6,800.96 LOW: 6,719.10 CLOSE: 6,800.96 VOL.: 0.611 B VAL(P): 3.522 B 56.84 pts, 0.84% 30 DAYS TO FEBRUARY 21, 2023	FEBRUARY 21, 2023 JAPAN (NIKKEI 225) 27,473.10 ▼ -58.84 -0.21 HONG KONG (HANG SENG) 20,529.49 ▼ -357.47 -1.71 TAIWAN (WEIGHTED) 15,563.00 ▲ 11.77 0.08 THAILAND (SET INDEX) 1,668.21 ▲ 10.52 0.63 S.KOREA (KSE COMPOSITE) 2,458.96 ▲ 3.84 0.16 SINGAPORE (STRAITS TIMES) 3,304.15 ▼ -4.60 -0.14 SYDNEY (ALL ORDINARIES) 7,336.30 ▼ -15.20 -0.21 MALAYSIA (KLSE COMPOSITE) 1,474.01 ▲ 0.55 0.04	FEBRUARY 20, 2023 Dow Jones* 33,826.690 ▲ 129.840 NASDAQ* 11,787.272 ▼ -68.562 S&P 500* 4,079.090 ▼ -11.320 FTSE 100 8,014.310 ▲ 9.950 Euro Stoxx50 3,937.85 ▲ 0.230 <small>* CLOSING PRICES AS OF FEBRUARY 17, 2023</small>	FX OPEN P54.940 HIGH P54.910 LOW P55.100 CLOSE P55.085 W.AVE. P55.008 VOL. \$1,034.65 M 13.50 cms 30 DAYS TO FEBRUARY 21, 2023 SOURCE : BAP	FEBRUARY 21, 2023 LATEST BID (0900GMT) PREVIOUS JAPAN (YEN) 134.650 134.170 HONG KONG (HK DOLLAR) 7.844 7.834 TAIWAN (NT DOLLAR) 30.462 30.378 THAILAND (BAHT) 34.650 34.400 S. KOREA (WON) 1,300.940 1,296.340 SINGAPORE (DOLLAR) 1.339 1.336 INDONESIA (RUPIAH) 15,185 15,155 MALAYSIA (RINGGIT) 4.431 4.428	FEBRUARY 21, 2023 US\$/UK POUND 1.1995 ▼ 1.2018 US\$/EURO 1.0650 ▼ 1.0682 \$/AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR 0.6878 ▼ 0.6898 CANADA DOLLAR/US\$ 1.3482 ▼ 1.3468 SWISS FRANC/US\$ 0.9263 ▲ 0.9241	FEBRUARY 21, 2023 FUTURES PRICE ON NEAREST MONTH OF DELIVERY \$82.40/BBL 30 DAYS TO FEBRUARY 20, 2023

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE'S 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS BY VALUE TURNOVER • FEBRUARY 21, 2023 (PSEi snapshot on S1/2; article on S2/2)

SM	ALI	BPI	ICT	AC	MPI	BDO	SMPH	GLO	MER
P897.500 Value P307,687,165 P25.500 ▲ 2.924%	P28.950 Value P276,505,950 -P0.150 ▼ -0.515%	P108.800 Value P218,778,618 P4.300 ▲ 4.115%	P206.000 Value P174,909,642 -P3.400 ▼ -1.624%	P675.000 Value P149,044,250 P7.000 ▲ 1.048%	P4.200 Value P132,985,210 -P0.010 ▼ -0.238%	P123.900 Value P123,865,212 -P0.600 ▼ -0.482%	P37.450 Value P123,810,370 P0.550 ▲ 1.491%	P1,990.000 Value P117,492,930 -P30.000 ▼ -1.485%	P310.000 Value P110,453,406 P2.000 ▲ 0.649%

Senate poised to approve RCEP

PHILIPPINE SENATORS on Tuesday backed progressively lower tariffs under the world's largest free trade agreement, covering nearly a third of the global population and about 30% of its global gross domestic product.

The Senate, which debated Southeast Asian nation's membership in the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) well into the night, was set to concur with its ratification. This comes more than two years since the Philippines signed

the mega-trade deal with 14 other countries — Australia, China, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and the nine other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in November 2020. The RCEP was ratified by then-President Rodrigo R.

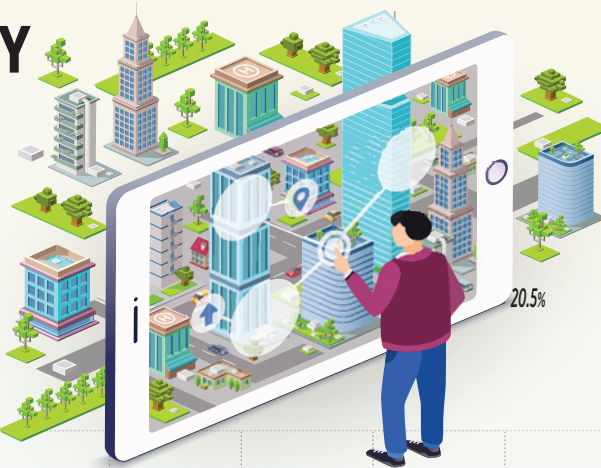
Duterte in September 2021, but the previous Senate did not give its concurrence due to concerns over the deal's adverse impact on the agriculture sector. The current Senate is dominated by allies of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr., who

has lobbied for the trade deal's approval. Among those who opposed the RCEP is Senator Ana Theresia "Risa" N. Hontiveros-Baraquel, who said there were still no efforts to protect the agriculture sector despite the delay.

"The agricultural sector said in the last Congress that they are not ready, we are not prepared agriculturally to really compete on a level playing field. They lamented that since the Senate deferred the decision on RCEP in the last Congress, RCEP, SI/9

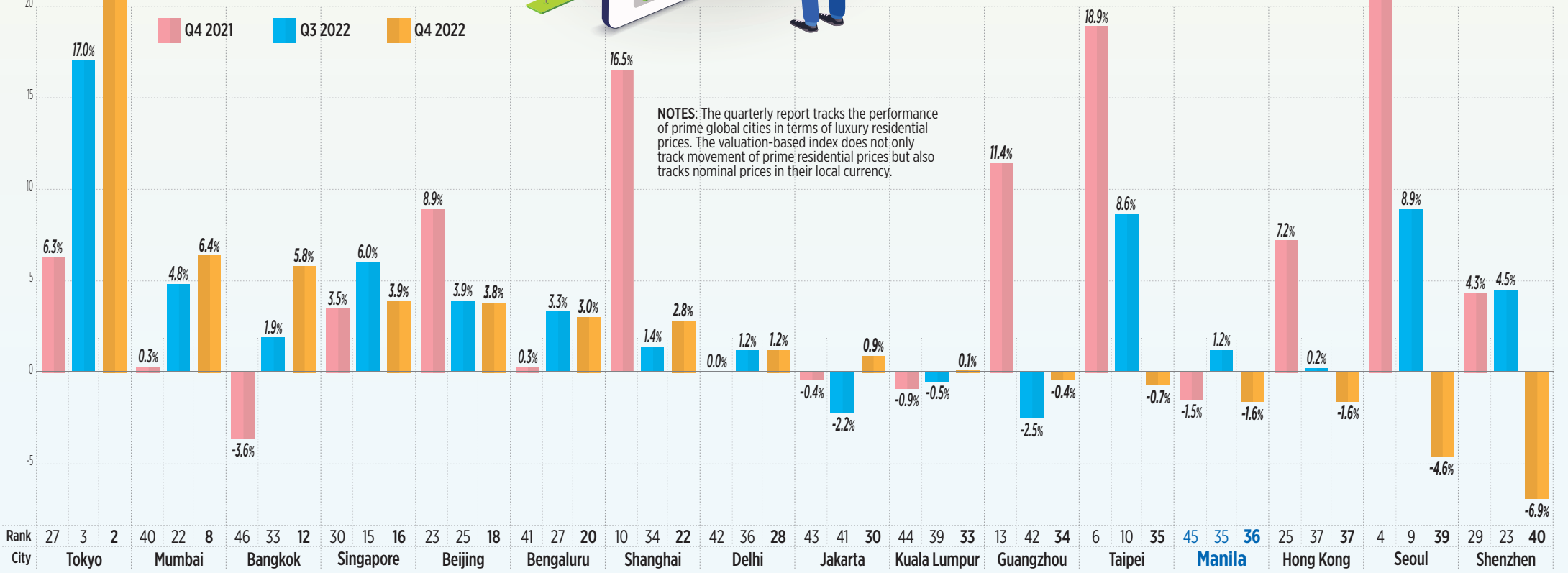
MANILA RANKS 36TH IN 45-CITY PRIME GLOBAL CITIES INDEX

Manila's prime residential prices dropped by 1.6% year on year in the fourth quarter of 2022 according to the latest edition of the Prime Global Cities Index by real estate consultancy firm Knight Frank. Placing 36th out of 45 cities, the Philippine capital stood ahead of Hong Kong (37th), Seoul (39th), and Shenzhen (40th).



Top 10			Bottom 10		
Q4 2022 Rank	City	Year-on-Year % Change	Q4 2022 Rank	City	Year-on-Year % Change
1	Dubai	88.8%	45	Wellington	-23.7%
2	Tokyo	22.8%	44	Auckland	-19.0%
3	Miami	21.6%	43	Frankfurt	-10.6%
4	Zurich	10.5%	42	Stockholm	-7.7%
5	Edinburgh	8.0%	41	Vancouver	-7.4%
6	Los Angeles	7.9%	40	Shenzhen	-6.9%
7	Dublin	6.8%	39	Seoul	-4.6%
8	Mumbai	6.4%	38	Monaco	-3.8%
9	Paris	6.2%	37	Hong Kong	-1.6%
10	Madrid	6.0%	36	Manila	-1.6%

Annual Changes in Prime Residential Prices of Select Asian Cities



Preferential trade deal will boost PHL-India ties — envoy

By Alyssa Nicole O. Tan Reporter

INDIA wants a preferential trade agreement (PTA) with the Philippines to accelerate investments and strengthen relations, according to its ambassador in Manila. "While our trade has increased quite considerably, it is not keeping up with the growth in our respective economies," Indian Ambassador Shambhu S. Kumaran said on the sidelines of a lunch meeting with *BusinessWorld*. "I do feel that this is the right time to have an enabling preferential trade agreement. It will be quick, ambitious, but realistic," he added. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) sees the Philippine gross domestic product (GDP) expanding 5% this year, slower than the 7.6%

growth in 2022. It also expects India's economy to slow to 6.1% in 2023, from 6.8% last year. Mr. Kumaran said the Philippine and Indian governments have agreed, in principle, to work on a preferential trade agreement. "There is clear interest and intent for both governments to start this discussion. We've exchanged the terms of reference, and I'm hopeful that we'll be able to pick up the negotiation process formally," he said. Initial talks on a PTA started in 2020, but negotiations have yet to formally begin. "The government of India is very action-oriented and very result-oriented. We don't believe in very long-winded processes," he said, noting a free trade deal between India and the United Arab Emirates was concluded in three months.

India, SI/9

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Balisacan hopes inflation may start to ease in March

PHILIPPINE INFLATION may start to plateau starting March as food supply is expected to improve due to the start of harvest season and lack of typhoons, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said on Tuesday. "We are hoping that we see a plateau already of inflation," he said during a Palace briefing. "It's our hope, *kasi* February, March, that's harvest season for farmers, and we did not have any major typhoons during the last few months... So we are expecting better data," he added.

Inflation hit a fresh 14-year high of 8.7% in January, accelerating from 8.1% in December as food prices soared amid supply issues. January marked the 10th consecutive month inflation was above the BSP's 2-4% target range. ING Bank N.V. Manila Senior Economist Nicholas Antonio T. Mapa said headline inflation will likely peak in February, barring any supply shocks. "Based on my model, inflation should peak in February because base effects will start to kick in unless there's a supply shock. Of course, if there's a storm or whatever, but if there's none, the peak will be in February," Mr. Mapa

said at an economic briefing on Tuesday. According to Mr. Mapa, even though inflation might peak this month, commodity prices might go down slowly due to how widespread it has become. "We're right in that situation in where second-round effects are starting to really spread in the (consumer price index) basket," he said, noting that 189 out of the 198 items in the January basket have above 4% inflation. Mr. Mapa said inflation may return to the 2-4% target band only by December. Meanwhile, First Metro Investment Corp. (FMIC) and the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P) said inflation is projected to average 8.1% in the first quarter. "Consistent with our forecast that Q1 inflation will average 8.1%, the Monetary Board increased policy rates by 50 basis points (bps) to 6% in its Feb. 16 meeting to keep inflation expectations in check, and minimize second-round effects," FMIC and UA&P said in their Market Call. The BSP also upwardly revised its average inflation forecast to 6.1% this year from 4.5% previously.

Inflation, SI/3

Central banks need to 'stay alert' as core inflation heats up

CENTRAL BANKS in Asia, including the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP), need to "stay alert" as core inflation in these economies are still running above target, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) said. In a blog dated Feb. 20, the IMF said that even though inflation is expected to moderate in the region this year, core inflation is proving to be more persistent and has yet to ease. The blog was authored by IMF Asia and Pacific Department Director Krishna Srinivasan, Deputy Director Thomas

Helbling, and Division Chief of Regional Studies and Mission Chief for the Philippines Shanaka J. Peiris. "The big supply shocks and permanent structural realignments associated with the pandemic have made calibrating monetary policy particularly challenging. Signals in the data about second-round effects are mixed, further heightening uncertainty for policy makers," the IMF said. The reopening of the Chinese economy may have also added pressure

on global commodity prices, especially in countries seeing a boost in tourism. "This means that central banks should tread carefully by reaffirming their commitment to price stability. Indeed, they may need to hike rates further if core inflation does not show clear signs of returning to target," the IMF said. The BSP raised the key interest rate by 50 basis points (bps) last week to a near 16-year high of 6%. The rates on the overnight deposit and lending facilities

were also increased to 5.5% and 6.5% respectively to tame inflation. The latest rate hike came after Philippine inflation quickened to a 14-year high of 8.7% in January, from 8.1% in December. It marked the 10th straight month inflation was above the BSP's 2-4% target range. Core inflation, which discounts food and fuel volatile prices, soared to 7.4% in January from 6.9% in December, the highest in more than two decades. Central banks, SI/3