

STOCK MARKET	ASIAN MARKETS	WORLD MARKETS	PESO-DOLLAR RATES	ASIAN MONIES-US\$ RATE	WORLD CURRENCIES	DUBAI CRUDE OIL
<b>PSEi</b> OPEN: 6,437.67 HIGH: 6,437.67 LOW: 6,330.53 CLOSE: 6,404.91 VOL.: 1.040 B VAL(P): 6.592 B 61.19 pts, 0.94% 30 DAYS TO MARCH 16, 2023	<b>MARCH 16, 2023</b> JAPAN (NIKKEI 225) 27,010.61 ▼ -218.87 -0.80 HONG KONG (HANG SENG) 19,203.91 ▼ -335.96 -1.72 TAIWAN (WEIGHTED) 15,221.12 ▼ -166.47 -1.08 THAILAND (SET INDEX) 1,554.36 ▼ -10.64 -0.68 S.KOREA (KSE COMPOSITE) 2,377.91 ▼ -1.81 -0.08 SINGAPORE (STRAITS TIMES) 3,154.53 ▼ -18.39 -0.58 SYDNEY (ALL ORDINARIES) 6,965.50 ▼ -103.40 -1.46 MALAYSIA (KLSE COMPOSITE) 1,391.60 ▼ -12.33 -0.88	<b>MARCH 15, 2023</b> Dow Jones 31,874.570 ▼ -280.830 NASDAQ 11,434.052 ▲ 5.903 S&P 500 3,891.930 ▼ -27.360 FTSE 100 7,344.450 ▼ -292.660 Euro Stoxx50 3,731.99 ▼ -93.610	<b>FX</b> OPEN P55.010 HIGH P54.850 LOW P55.090 CLOSE P54.860 W.AVE. P54.972 VOL. \$799.00 M 9.00 ctns 30 DAYS TO MARCH 16, 2023 SOURCE: BAP	<b>MARCH 16, 2023</b> <b>LATEST BID (0900GMT)</b> PREVIOUS JAPAN (YEN) 132.910 134.470 HONG KONG (HK DOLLAR) 7.849 7.850 TAIWAN (NT DOLLAR) 30.634 30.643 THAILAND (BAHT) 34.410 34.560 S. KOREA (WON) 1,313.240 1,306.950 SINGAPORE (DOLLAR) 1.347 1.344 INDONESIA (RUPIAH) 15,375 15,360 MALAYSIA (RINGGIT) 4.501 4.480	<b>MARCH 16, 2023</b> US\$/UK POUND 1.2063 ▼ 1.2155 US\$/EURO 1.0609 ▼ 1.0719 \$/AUST DOLLAR 0.6645 ▼ 0.6668 CANADA DOLLAR/US\$ 1.3748 ▼ 1.3693 SWISS FRANC/US\$ 0.9268 ▲ 0.9149	<b>FUTURES PRICE ON NEAREST MONTH OF DELIVERY</b> <b>\$77.84/BBL</b> 30 DAYS TO MARCH 15, 2023

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE'S 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS BY VALUE TURNOVER • MARCH 16, 2023 (PSEi snapshot on S1/4; article on S2/2)

ICT	P198.000	BDO	P121.500	ALI	P26.300	SMPH	P34.000	FCG	P0.900	BPI	P102.900	GLO	P1,730.000	JFC	P215.000	TEL	P1,300.000	SM	P874.000
Value	P670,452,544	Value	P624,810,500	Value	P349,322,625	Value	P338,700,735	Value	P298,555,220	Value	P266,089,064	Value	P243,770,960	Value	P232,514,896	Value	P205,056,685	Value	P197,513,205
PO.300	▲ 0.152%	-P2.800	▼ -2.253%	-P0.200	▼ -0.755%	-P0.050	▼ -0.147%	-P0.110	▼ -10.891%	-P1.400	▼ -1.342%	-P28.000	▼ -1.593%	-P9.000	▼ -4.018%	-P10.000	▼ -0.763%	P0.000	— 0.000%

## Banks seen to cope with SVB contagion

THE ASIA-PACIFIC banking sector, including in the Philippines, has reasonable buffers to cope with possible contagion effects from the failure of Silicon Valley Bank (SVB), S&P Global Ratings said.

"Asia-Pacific banks are well-placed to absorb potential contagion effects emanating from the SVB collapse. Direct exposures are negligible, and secondary impacts are manageable," S&P said in a note released on Thursday.

S&P said it believes the fallout from SVB would be manageable at current rating levels across Asia-Pacific banks. Of around 380 banks and nonbank financial institutions it rates in the region, S&P said it does not anticipate

any rating actions directly related to the SVB default. SVB became the biggest bank in the United States to fail since the global financial crisis in 2008. Its sudden closure rattled markets, raising concern over its possible impact on the global banking sector.

Of the 18 banking jurisdictions it covers in Asia-Pacific, S&P said

economic risk trends are stable in 17 jurisdictions, including the Philippines. Only New Zealand's economic risk trends are negative. "While the failure of SVB has no immediate impact on the ratings on Asia-Pacific banks, the knock-on effects could yet have an effect. Stresses that banks can comfortably take in their stride could morph into bigger prob-

lems that are difficult to predict. They could also connect or combine with other stresses causing a confluence of negative developments that could yet test buffers across the Asia-Pacific banking sector," S&P said.

Unlike SVB, securities held typically by Philippine banks could have been as high as one-third of their books in 2020 and

2021 when interest rates were extremely low, S&P Director and Lead Analyst for South and Southeast Asia Ivan Tan said. This was higher compared with the average South and Southeast Asian banks.

"So, when 2022 came around, and just before the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) started to

2021 when interest rates were extremely low, S&P Director and Lead Analyst for South and Southeast Asia Ivan Tan said. This was higher compared with the average South and Southeast Asian banks.

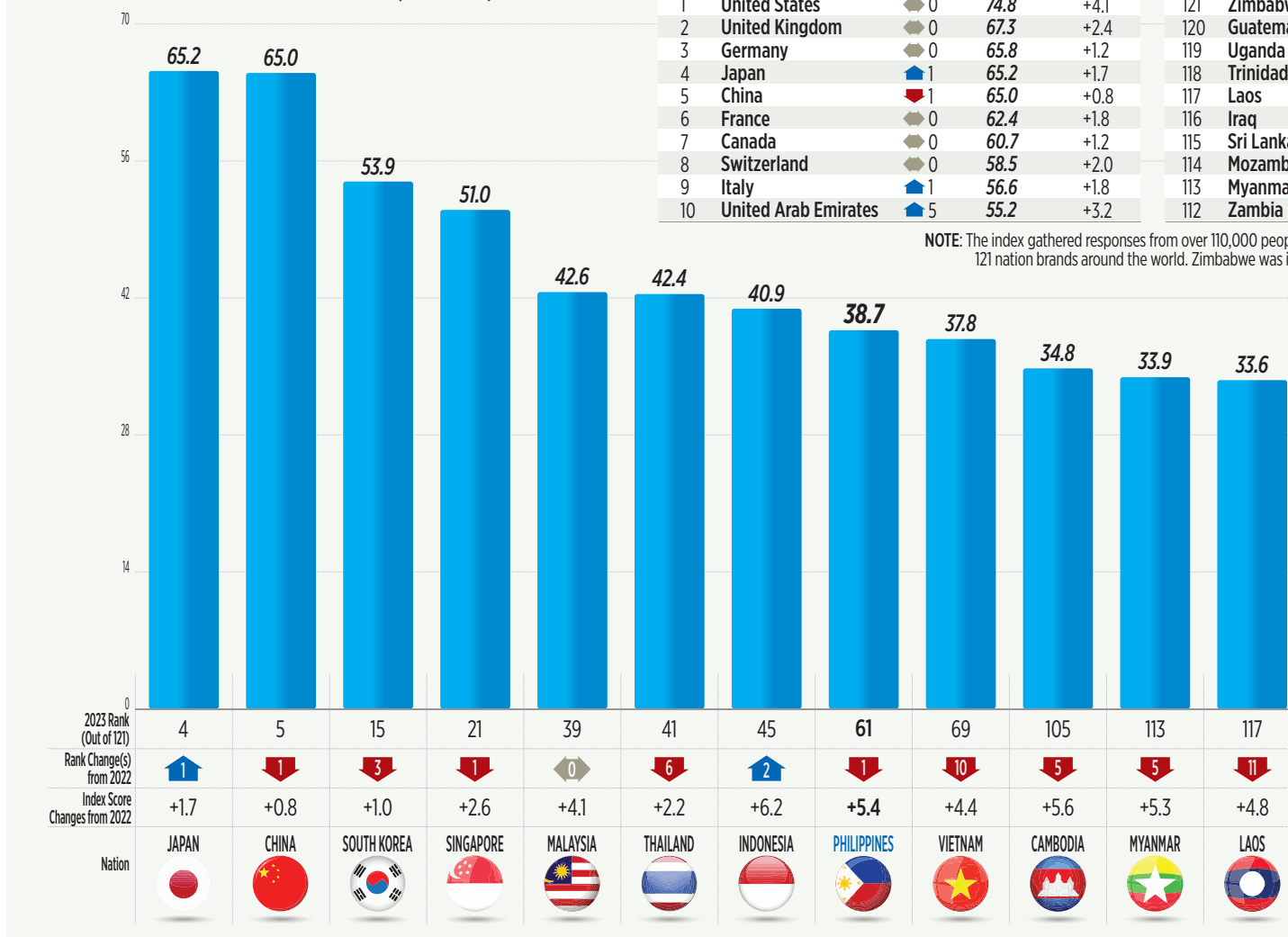
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## PHILIPPINES INCHES DOWN IN 'SOFT POWER' LIST

2023 Global Soft Power Index Scores of Select East and Southeast Asian Countries (Out of 100)

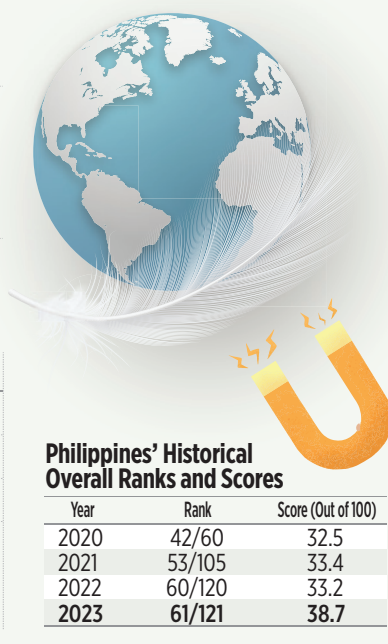


The Philippines fell a spot to 61<sup>st</sup> out of 121 nations with a score of 38.7 out of 100 in the 2023 edition of the Global Soft Power Index by brand valuation consultancy Brand Finance. The index measures "soft power" or a nation's ability to influence various actors in the global arena through attraction or persuasion.

Top 10					Bottom 10				
2023 Rank (Out of 121)	Nation	Rank Changes from 2022	2023 Index Score (Out of 100)	Index Score Changes from 2022	2023 Rank (Out of 121)	Nation	Rank Changes from 2022	2023 Index Score (Out of 100)	Index Score Changes from 2022
1	United States	0	74.8	+4.1	121	Zimbabwe	New Entry	32.7	-
2	United Kingdom	0	67.3	+2.4	120	Guatemala	9	33.3	+5.1
3	Germany	0	65.8	+1.2	119	Uganda	4	33.4	+6.0
4	Japan	1	65.2	+1.7	118	Trinidad and Tobago	2	33.5	+8.2
5	China	1	65.0	+0.8	117	Laos	11	33.6	+4.8
6	France	0	62.4	+1.8	116	Iraq	35	33.7	+2.7
7	Canada	0	60.7	+1.2	115	Sri Lanka	42	33.8	+2.0
8	Switzerland	0	58.5	+2.0	114	Mozambique	3	33.9	+7.4
9	Italy	1	56.6	+1.8	113	Myanmar	5	33.9	+5.3
10	United Arab Emirates	5	55.2	+3.2	112	Zambia	5	33.9	+5.1

NOTE: The index gathered responses from over 110,000 people across more than 100 countries, surveying perceptions of 121 nation brands around the world. Zimbabwe was included for the first time in the latest iteration of the report.

SOURCE: BRAND FINANCE'S GLOBAL SOFT POWER INDEX 2023 (HTTPS://BRANDIRECTORY.COM/SOFTPOWER/) BUSINESSWORLD RESEARCH: ABIGAIL MARIE P. YRAOLA BUSINESSWORLD GRAPHICS: BONG R. FORTIN



## BIR goes after firms issuing fake receipts

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue (BIR) on Thursday filed criminal complaints before the Department of Justice (DoJ) against four suspected "ghost" corporations allegedly behind the sale of fake receipts, which have cost the government around P25.5 billion in revenue losses.

BIR Commissioner Romeo D. Lumagui, Jr. said the government will go after not just the companies that issued these fraudulent receipts, but also their buyers.

"We are just getting started. The financial magnitude of this syndicate issuing fictitious receipts is alarming. They are profiting from businesses through convincing their clients to ghost our tax authority," he said in a statement.

Mr. Lumagui said the taxpayers and businesses found to have used these fake receipts will also be subjected to a BIR audit.

The BIR chief personally went to the DoJ to file the complaints against four corporations for violating Sections 254, 255, and 267 of the National Internal Revenue Code of 1997.

A BIR statement identified the four companies as Buildforce Trading, Inc., Crazykitchen Food-trade Corp., Decarich Supertrade, Inc., and Redington Corp.

"These four corporations have no real businesses apart from selling receipts so they can sell these to other buyers or companies who will use them as deductions to their expenses," Mr. Lumagui told reporters in Filipino on Thursday.

"It is clear that this is in violation of our law on tax evasion. In addition to this, their tax liabilities with all the penalties and surcharges will be imposed," he added.

Receipts, S1/9

## Supreme Court says senior citizens' discount covers interment service

SENIOR CITIZENS are entitled to a 20% discount on interment services, which are covered by the funeral and burial expenses provided for under the law, the Supreme Court (SC) said.

In a statement on Thursday, the High Court said it granted the government's appeal to overturn a Cagayan de Oro trial court's 2018 ruling that excluded interment services from the mandated senior citizen discount.

"The Senior Citizens Act is a law created to grant a bundle of benefits in favor of senior citizens or those at least 60 years old, giving flesh to the declared policy of motivating senior citizens to contribute to national building and

encouraging their families and communities to reaffirm the Filipino tradition of caring for them," the SC said, citing the ruling penned by SC Associate Justice Rodil V. Zalameda.

The petition was filed by the Office of the Solicitor General, Office of the Senior Citizens Affairs (OSCA) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

In 2018, the Cagayan de Oro Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 17 sided with Pryce Corp., Inc., a company that sells memorial lots and provides interment services, which claimed interment services were not covered under the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010.

The RTC had said digging of land for the dead, filling a gravesite with concrete and other services during an actual burial were not subject to the 20% discount for senior citizens.

The trial court added that the implementing rules and regulations (IRR) of the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010 explicitly mentioned that only the purchase of a casket or urn, embalming service, use of a hospital morgue and the transportation of the body to the intended burial site were the services entitled to the 20% discount.

The Supreme Court disagreed, saying the law's IRR does not provide for an exact definition of "funeral and burial

services." It noted that the scope of discounted services is not limited to the ones listed under the IRR.

The High Court said that a burial service refers to any service offered in connection with the "final disposition, entombment or interment of human remains."

"The Court found that the exclusion by the RTC of interment services from the coverage of the 20% senior citizen discount is not provided under the law, and that the IRR, which does not explicitly exclude interment services, cannot be interpreted to support the lower court's Resolution. It stressed that a law cannot be amended by a mere regulation, and the administrative agency

issuing the regulation may not enlarge, alter, or restrict the provisions of the law it administers," the SC said.

The law upheld the state's obligation under the Constitution to implement social security programs for elderly citizens, it said.

"It would be unreasonable to infer that Congress intended to differentiate between the deceased's final solace for the purpose of granting the 20% discount absent a clear legislative intent to the contrary," the tribunal said, citing SC Associate Justice Amy C. Lazaro-Javier's separate concurring opinion.

The High Court has yet to upload its ruling on its website. — John Victor D. Ordoñez

## Philippines falls to 54<sup>th</sup> spot in UNCTAD's Frontier Technology Index

THE PHILIPPINES fell 10 spots to rank 54<sup>th</sup> out of 166 countries in utilizing frontier technologies for 2022, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

UNCTAD said in its Technology and Innovation Report that the Philippines' ranking in the Frontier Technology Index was

lower compared with 44<sup>th</sup> place in the previous year's index.

Frontier technologies refer to artificial intelligence (AI), the internet of things (IoT), big data, blockchain, 5G, 3D printing, robotics, drones, gene editing, and nanotechnology.

The Philippines had a score of 0.62, equivalent to an "upper-

middle" score, slightly higher than the previous score of 0.60.

The Philippines ranked higher than its neighbors such as Vietnam (62<sup>nd</sup> rank), Brunei (69<sup>th</sup>), Indonesia (85<sup>th</sup>), Cambodia (112<sup>th</sup>), and Myanmar (133<sup>rd</sup>). However, it lagged other Southeast Asian nations such as Singapore (3<sup>rd</sup>), Malaysia (32<sup>nd</sup>), and Thailand (49<sup>th</sup>).

The United States led all countries in the 2022 index, followed by Sweden.

"Although developing countries are the least prepared to use frontier technologies, several economies in Asia have made important policy changes that have enabled them to perform better than

expected according to their gross domestic product (GDP) per capita," the UNCTAD said in a separate statement.

The index ranks 166 countries based on information and communication technology (ICT), skills, research and development (R&D), industrial capacity and finance indicators.

The Philippines saw a decline in ranking for the following indicators: ICT (94<sup>th</sup> from 76<sup>th</sup> last year), R&D (52<sup>nd</sup> from 46<sup>th</sup>), industry (3<sup>rd</sup> from 2<sup>nd</sup>) and finance (80<sup>th</sup> from 52<sup>nd</sup>).

However, it improved its ranking for the skills indicator (79<sup>th</sup> from 88<sup>th</sup>).

UNCTAD, S1/9

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