P25 IN METRO MANILA, PHILIPPINES

BusinessWorld

A NEWSPAPER IS A PUBLIC TRUST

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

STOCK MARKET

PSEi — 30 DAYS TO AUGUST 17, 2023 — ▼ 45.12 PTS. 0.7%

OPEN:	6,393.53
HIGH:	6,409.98
LOW:	6,353.74
CLOSE:	6,364.97
VOL.:	0.343 B
VAL(P):	4.916 B

ASIAN MARKETS — AUGUST 17, 2023

	CLOSE		NET	%
Japan (Nikkei 225)	31,626.00	▼	-140.82	-0.44
Hong Kong (Hang Seng)	18,326.63	▼	-2.67	-0.01
Taiwan (Weighted)	16,516.66	▲	69.88	0.42
Thailand (SET Index)	1,528.81	▲	9.25	0.61
S.Korea (Kse Composite)	2,519.85	▼	-5.79	-0.23
Singapore (Straits Times)	3,196.75	▼	-16.83	-0.52
Sydney (All Ordinaries)	7,146.00	▼	-49.20	-0.68
Malaysia (Klse Composite)	1,447.98	▼	-15.53	-1.06

WORLD MARKETS — AUGUST 16, 2023

	CLOSE		NET
Dow Jones	34,765.740	▼	-180.650
NASDAQ	13,474.628	▼	-156.419
S&P 500	4,404.330	▼	-33.530
FTSE 100	7,356.880	▼	-32.760
Euro Stoxx50	3,939.860	▲	1.790

PESO-DOLLAR RATES

FX — 30 DAYS TO AUGUST 17, 2023 — ▼ 25.50 CTVS

OPEN	P56.670
HIGH	P56.570
LOW	P56.810
CLOSE	P56.770
W.AVE.	P56.678
VOL.	$960.55 M

SOURCE : BAP

ASIAN MONIES-US$ RATE — AUGUST 17, 2023

	LATEST BID (0900GMT)		PREVIOUS
Japan (yen)	146.220	▼	145.540
Hong Kong (HK dollar)	7.829	—	7.829
Taiwan (NT dollar)	31.954	▼	31.899
Thailand (baht)	35.460	▼	35.350
S. Korea (won)	1,341.310	▼	1,336.760
Singapore (dollar)	1.361	▼	1.357
Indonesia (rupiah)	15,280	—	15,280
Malaysia (ringgit)	4.650	▼	4.627

WORLD CURRENCIES — AUGUST 17, 2023

	CLOSE		PREVIOUS
US$/UK pound	1.2712	▼	1.2760
US$/Euro	1.0865	▼	1.0928
US$/Aust dollar	0.6405	▼	0.6466
Canada dollar/US$	1.3526	▲	1.3483
Swiss Franc/US$	0.8790	▲	0.8779

DUBAI CRUDE OIL

FUTURES PRICE ON NEAREST MONTH OF DELIVERY — $86.05/BBL — ▼ $1.10 — 30 DAYS TO AUGUST 16, 2023

VOL. XXXVII • ISSUE 17 — FRIDAY • AUGUST 18, 2023 • www.bworldonline.com — S1/1-10 • 2 SECTIONS, 16 PAGES

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE'S 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS BY VALUE TURNOVER • AUGUST 17, 2023 (PSEi snapshot on *S1/4*; article on *S2/2*)

		Value			
ALI	P30.000	P640,945,270	P0.000	—	0.000%
SMPH	P30.300	P572,592,580	-P0.100	▼	-0.329%
ICT	P215.800	P421,513,930	P3.800	▲	1.792%
BDO	P142.000	P337,348,224	-P1.000	▼	-0.699%
BPI	P113.400	P268,550,959	P0.400	▲	0.354%
SM	P860.500	P246,470,765	-P25.500	▼	-2.878%
JFC	P250.000	P224,666,448	-P0.800	▼	-0.319%
AC	P593.000	P180,528,985	-P6.500	▼	-1.084%
TEL	P1,228.000	P141,887,695	-P6.000	▼	-0.486%
URC	P119.900	P134,631,494	-P5.000	▼	-4.003%

BSP extends 'hawkish' rate pause

By Keisha B. Ta-asan
Reporter

THE BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas (BSP) kept benchmark interest rates steady for a third straight meeting on Thursday, but signaled it is prepared to resume tightening if needed amid risks to inflation.

At the same time, the BSP raised its inflation forecast for this year and next, reflecting the spike in global oil prices.

The Monetary Board left its overnight reverse repurchase rate unchanged at a near 16-year high of 6.25%, as expected by 13 economists in a *BusinessWorld* poll last week. Interest rates on the overnight deposit and lending facilities were maintained at 5.75% and 6.75%, respectively.

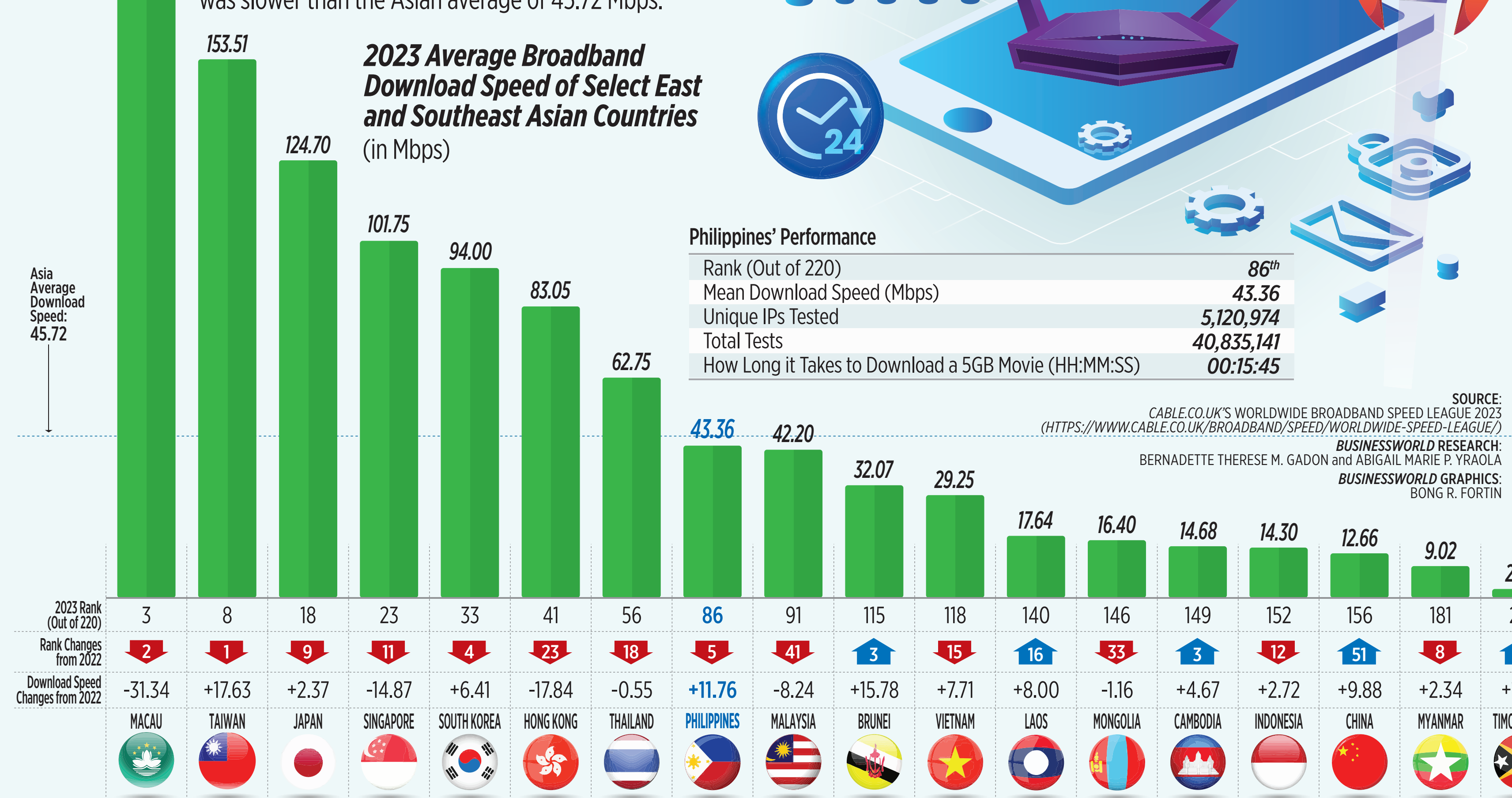
The BSP has raised borrowing costs by 425 basis points (bps) from May 2022 to March 2023 to tame inflation.

"The Monetary Board deemed it appropriate to maintain monetary policy settings to allow a moderation of inflation even as authorities continue to assess the emerging risks to the inflation outlook," BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr. said after chairing his first policy meeting as governor.

Rate, S1/9

PHILIPPINES SLIPS IN BROADBAND SPEED TRACKER

The Philippines fell five places to 86th out of 220 countries and territories even as its average download speed improved by 11.76 megabits per second (Mbps) to 43.36 Mbps in the 2023 edition of the Worldwide Broadband Speed League by price comparison site *Cable.co.uk*. The country's download speed was slower than the Asian average of 45.72 Mbps.



	2023 Average Download Speed (Mbps)	2023 Rank (Out of 220)	Rank Changes from 2022	Download Speed Changes from 2022
MACAU	231.40	3	▼2	-31.34
TAIWAN	153.51	8	▼1	+17.63
JAPAN	124.70	18	▼9	+2.37
SINGAPORE	101.75	23	▼11	-14.87
SOUTH KOREA	94.00	33	▼4	+6.41
HONG KONG	83.05	41	▼23	-17.84
THAILAND	62.75	56	▼18	-0.55
PHILIPPINES	43.36	86	▼5	+11.76
MALAYSIA	42.20	91	▼41	-8.24
BRUNEI	32.07	115	▲3	+15.78
VIETNAM	29.25	118	▼15	+7.71
LAOS	17.64	140	▲16	+8.00
MONGOLIA	16.40	146	▼33	-1.16
CAMBODIA	14.68	149	▲3	+4.67
INDONESIA	14.30	152	▼12	+2.72
CHINA	12.66	156	▲51	+9.88
MYANMAR	9.02	181	▼8	+2.34
TIMOR-LESTE	2.50	217	▲2	+1.56

Philippines' Performance

Rank (Out of 220)	86th
Mean Download Speed (Mbps)	43.36
Unique IPs Tested	5,120,974
Total Tests	40,835,141
How Long it Takes to Download a 5GB Movie (HH:MM:SS)	00:15:45

SOURCE: *CABLE.CO.UK'S* WORLDWIDE BROADBAND SPEED LEAGUE 2023 (HTTPS://WWW.CABLE.CO.UK/BROADBAND/SPEED/WORLDWIDE-SPEED-LEAGUE/)
BUSINESSWORLD RESEARCH: BERNADETTE THERESE M. GADON and ABIGAIL MARIE P. YRAOLA
BUSINESSWORLD GRAPHICS: BONG R. FORTIN

Countries/Territories with the Fastest Broadband

2023 Rank (Out of 220)	Country/Territory	2023 Average Download Speed (in Mbps)
1	Jersey	264.52
2	Liechtenstein	246.76
3	Macau	231.40
4	Iceland	229.35
5	Gibraltar	206.27
6	Andorra	190.40
7	Luxembourg	162.21
8	Taiwan	153.51
9	France	152.45
10	Netherlands	142.49

Countries/Territories with the Slowest Broadband

2023 Rank (Out of 220)	Country/Territory	2023 Average Download Speed (in Mbps)
220	Afghanistan	1.71
219	Yemen	1.79
218	Syria	2.30
217	Timor-Leste	2.50
216	Equatorial Guinea	2.70
215	Wallis and Futuna	2.72
214	Tajikistan	2.98
213	Cameroon	3.16
212	Ethiopia	3.54
211	Burundi	3.70

Philippine Historical Performance

Year	Rank	Average Download Speed
2017	87/189	3.69
2018	89/200	5.18
2019	97/207	6.05
2020	120/221	8.77
2021	102/224	16.84
2022	81/219	31.60
2023	**86/220**	**43.36**

Fish supply deficit seen in 4th quarter

THE BUREAU of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) expects the fish supply deficit to reach 57,830 metric tons (MT) in the fourth quarter.

Based on its supply and demand outlook, the BFAR said there will be an estimated fish supply of 769,446 MT in the fourth quarter, which will not be enough to cover the demand of 827,285 MT. The deficit is equivalent to six days' supply of fish.

BFAR spokesperson Nazario C. Briguera on Thursday defended the government's approval of a plan to import fish in the fourth quarter, saying imports are needed to augment the supply during the closed fishing season in parts of the country.

The Agriculture department earlier this week approved the plan to import 35,000 MT of fish for wet markets for the fourth quarter. This includes frozen round scad or *galunggong*, bigeye scad, mackerel, bonito, and moonfish.

"Of course, if we have enough supply, we expect prices to go down. We are also closely monitoring to ensure there will be no gap or deficit in the supply of fish in wet markets, especially in Metro Manila," Mr. Briguera told reporters in mixed Filipino and English.

Closed fishing season is implemented in northern Palawan province, Ilocos, Negros Occidental, Capiz, and Cebu during the fourth quarter. This would allow fish to spawn and repopulate over the period.

Sardine fishing is not allowed in northern Palawan from Nov. 1 to Jan. 31, while the closed fishing season for herring and mackerel in the Visayan Sea runs from Nov. 15 to Feb. 15.

Asis G. Perez, former BFAR director and co-convenor of advocacy group Tugon Kabuhayan, said in a Viber message that the industry is aware of the drop in production during closed fishing season.

"Generally, we are in agreement that the fourth quarter is the time when production is the lowest, particularly in fisheries as this is the time when our three major closed seasons happened and also the time for strong *amihan* (northeast monsoon)," he said.

Mr. Perez said that the government should focus on measures that will increase production in aquaculture to boost the overall fisheries production and build more cold storage facilities.

"As this is an annual event, the fisheries sector has responded by increasing aquaculture output. Many of our aquaculture producers time their production schedule to meet these demands," he added.

The import plan comes on the heels of an 11% decline in fish production during the second quarter. — **SJT**

Power rates expected to drop in coming months

THE PHILIPPINES can expect power prices to go down in the coming months amid softening global coal prices and declining rates at the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM), according to the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC).

ERC Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer Monalisa C. Dimalanta said the agency expects power rates to continue falling in the next few months.

"Over the summer months there is always a trend towards higher rates because of the increased demand. And now what we see over the last few months, also because the global prices for coal have really been softening, the prices in WESM are also declining, that's what we see," she said before the Joint Congressional Energy Commission hearing on Thursday.

Ms. Dimalanta made the statement in response to Bataan Rep. Albert S. Garcia's question if the ERC expects power rates to continue their downtrend.

"Although what we see in the generation rates being passed on, they are not decreasing at the pace commensurate to the pace at which coal prices are decreasing. That's part of the analysis we are conducting in the commission."

Power rates in areas covered by Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) fell this month as the generation charge declined for a third straight month.

Meanwhile, the Department of Energy (DoE) does not expect to have a shortfall in power reserves in the Luzon grid for the rest of the year.

"Our available capacity, including the current resumption of operation in Ilijan, will provide ample supply and reserve to the Luzon grid," Energy Assistant Secretary Mario C. Marasigan said during the same hearing.

He said there may be potential yellow and red alerts in the Visayas during peak hours in the afternoon, but "this will be easily resolved" by the transfer of electricity coming from the Luzon-Visayas interconnection, as well as the ongoing testing and commission of the Mindanao-Visayas interconnection project.

"We have excess capacity in Mindanao, so we don't see any alerts in Mindanao," Mr. Marasigan said.

Power, S1/9

Philippine casino revenue seen doubling by 2028 as tourists flock in

MANILA — The Philippine gambling industry is set to double its gross gaming revenue by 2028, as the country attracts more tourists such as wealthy Chinese gamblers, the gaming regulator's chief said on Wednesday.

At least six new casino facilities worth roughly around $3 billion are in the pipeline to boost the Southeast Asian nation's free-wheeling gaming industry ahead of competition from Japan, which has a sprawling casino set for construction, and Thailand, which is planning to legalize gambling.

The country's gaming sector will likely post at least 10% annual growth in gross gaming revenue (GGR), which is projected to post a new record high this year and hit P450 billion to P500 billion ($7.9 billion to $8.8 billion) in five years' time, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (PAGCOR) Chairman Alejandro Tengco told Reuters.

Total GGR, a key metric in the industry representing the amount players wager minus their winnings, hit a record P256 billion in 2019 and was poised for further growth until the coronavirus pandemic decimated the industry. GGR started recovering in 2021 and reached P214 billion in 2022.

"Currently, the strong performance is supported by a stable of local players," Mr. Tengco said. "There is still an opportunity for the foreign market to increase further due to improving foreign travel guidelines."

However, long-term projections could be dampened by headwinds such as more armed conflicts between countries, proliferation of illegal gambling, and an economic downturn, Mr. Tengco said.

The Philippine gambling scene, which includes a smaller version of the Las Vegas gaming strip located in the capital, attracts high rollers from countries like China, Japan and South Korea. It has enticed foreign and domestic firms to set up billion-dollar integrated casino-resorts.

Adding to four sprawling casinos operating in the capital, six more gaming facilities are expected to be put up across the country, Mr. Tengco said.

It includes an up to $2-billion casino and golf course in Pampanga province, a $300-million project by Bloomberry Resorts in Cavite province, and a $300 million by Global-Estate Resorts in holiday island Boracay, PAGCOR data show.

While planned casinos in Thailand and Japan are seen as threats, the Philippines is beefing up its status as a preferred destination by privatizing state-owned casinos, new gaming projects, and policy reforms, Mr. Tengco said. — ***Reuters***