

STOCK MARKET	ASIAN MARKETS	WORLD MARKETS	PESO-DOLLAR RATES	ASIAN MONIES-US\$ RATE	WORLD CURRENCIES	DUBAI CRUDE OIL																																																																				
PSEi OPEN: 6,630.26 HIGH: 6,679.96 LOW: 6,626.82 CLOSE: 6,679.96 VOL.: 0.343 B VAL(P): 5.635 B 58.08 pts, 0.87% 30 DAYS TO JANUARY 24, 2024	JANUARY 24, 2024 <table border="1"> <tr><th>CLOSE</th><th>NET</th><th>%</th></tr> <tr><td>JAPAN (Nikkei 225)</td><td>36,226.48</td><td>-291.09 -0.80</td></tr> <tr><td>HONG KONG (HANG SENG)</td><td>15,899.87</td><td>545.89 3.56</td></tr> <tr><td>TAIWAN (WEIGHTED)</td><td>17,875.83</td><td>1.24 0.01</td></tr> <tr><td>THAILAND (SET INDEX)</td><td>1,381.19</td><td>24.65 1.82</td></tr> <tr><td>S.KOREA (KSE COMPOSITE)</td><td>2,469.69</td><td>-8.92 -0.36</td></tr> <tr><td>SINGAPORE (STRAITS TIMES)</td><td>3,153.33</td><td>18.08 0.58</td></tr> <tr><td>SYDNEY (ALL ORDINARIES)</td><td>7,519.20</td><td>4.30 0.06</td></tr> <tr><td>MALAYSIA (KLSE COMPOSITE)</td><td>1,504.10</td><td>7.99 0.53</td></tr> </table>	CLOSE	NET	%	JAPAN (Nikkei 225)	36,226.48	-291.09 -0.80	HONG KONG (HANG SENG)	15,899.87	545.89 3.56	TAIWAN (WEIGHTED)	17,875.83	1.24 0.01	THAILAND (SET INDEX)	1,381.19	24.65 1.82	S.KOREA (KSE COMPOSITE)	2,469.69	-8.92 -0.36	SINGAPORE (STRAITS TIMES)	3,153.33	18.08 0.58	SYDNEY (ALL ORDINARIES)	7,519.20	4.30 0.06	MALAYSIA (KLSE COMPOSITE)	1,504.10	7.99 0.53	JANUARY 23, 2024 <table border="1"> <tr><th>CLOSE</th><th>NET</th></tr> <tr><td>Dow Jones</td><td>37,905,450 -96,360</td></tr> <tr><td>NASDAQ</td><td>15,425,940 65,650</td></tr> <tr><td>S&P 500</td><td>4,864,600 14,170</td></tr> <tr><td>FTSE 100</td><td>7,485,730 -1,980</td></tr> <tr><td>Euro Stoxx50</td><td>4,058,750 -15,010</td></tr> </table>	CLOSE	NET	Dow Jones	37,905,450 -96,360	NASDAQ	15,425,940 65,650	S&P 500	4,864,600 14,170	FTSE 100	7,485,730 -1,980	Euro Stoxx50	4,058,750 -15,010	FX OPEN P56.300 HIGH P56.200 LOW P56.420 CLOSE P56.300 W.AVE. P56.300 VOL. \$1,380.40 M 14.50 cts 30 DAYS TO JANUARY 24, 2024 SOURCE : BAP	JANUARY 24, 2024 LATEST BID (0900GMT) <table border="1"> <tr><th>PREVIOUS</th></tr> <tr><td>JAPAN (YEN)</td><td>147.380 147.520</td></tr> <tr><td>HONG KONG (HK DOLLAR)</td><td>7.819 7.824</td></tr> <tr><td>TAIWAN (NT DOLLAR)</td><td>31.325 31.361</td></tr> <tr><td>THAILAND (BAHT)</td><td>35.620 35.650</td></tr> <tr><td>S. KOREA (WON)</td><td>1,334.130 1,335.980</td></tr> <tr><td>SINGAPORE (DOLLAR)</td><td>1.338 1.339</td></tr> <tr><td>INDONESIA (RUPIAH)</td><td>15,705 15,625</td></tr> <tr><td>MALAYSIA (RINGGIT)</td><td>4.729 4.724</td></tr> </table>	PREVIOUS	JAPAN (YEN)	147.380 147.520	HONG KONG (HK DOLLAR)	7.819 7.824	TAIWAN (NT DOLLAR)	31.325 31.361	THAILAND (BAHT)	35.620 35.650	S. KOREA (WON)	1,334.130 1,335.980	SINGAPORE (DOLLAR)	1.338 1.339	INDONESIA (RUPIAH)	15,705 15,625	MALAYSIA (RINGGIT)	4.729 4.724	JANUARY 24, 2024 <table border="1"> <tr><th>CLOSE</th><th>PREVIOUS</th></tr> <tr><td>US\$/UK POUND</td><td>1.2758 1.2729</td></tr> <tr><td>US\$/EURO</td><td>1.0898 1.0891</td></tr> <tr><td>US\$/AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR</td><td>0.6604 0.6589</td></tr> <tr><td>CANADA DOLLAR/US\$</td><td>1.3440 1.3473</td></tr> <tr><td>SWISS FRANC/US\$</td><td>0.8654 0.8676</td></tr> </table>	CLOSE	PREVIOUS	US\$/UK POUND	1.2758 1.2729	US\$/EURO	1.0898 1.0891	US\$/AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR	0.6604 0.6589	CANADA DOLLAR/US\$	1.3440 1.3473	SWISS FRANC/US\$	0.8654 0.8676	FUTURES PRICE ON NEAREST MONTH OF DELIVERY \$79.90/BBL 83.00 77.00 72.00 67.00 62.00 57.00 52.00 47.00 42.00 37.00 32.00 27.00 22.00 17.00 12.00 7.00 2.00 30 DAYS TO JANUARY 23, 2024 \$2.15
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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE'S 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS BY VALUE TURNOVER • JANUARY 24, 2024 (PSEi snapshot on S1/2; article on S2/2)

BDO	P144.800	ALI	P34.500	SM	P900.000	ICT	P246.000	JFC	P270.000	GTCAP	P660.000	SMPH	P33.500	URC	P112.400	BPI	P109.600	BLOOM	P10.760
Value	P675,010,847	Value	P383,018,655	Value	P317,799,195	Value	P293,216,306	Value	P278,260,634	Value	P239,410,160	Value	P229,076,595	Value	P205,265,147	Value	P195,547,960	Value	P141,627,314
P2.800	▲ 1.972%	P0.200	▲ 0.583%	P10.000	▲ 1.124%	P2.600	▲ 1.068%	P7.000	▲ 2.662%	P19.000	▲ 2.964%	P0.450	▲ 1.362%	P0.000	— 0.000%	P2.000	▲ 1.859%	P0.320	▲ 3.065%

No new taxes this year, says Recto

By Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jacson Reporter

FINANCE SECRETARY Ralph G. Recto said on Wednesday that he does not plan to introduce new taxes as elevated inflation remains a "most urgent concern."

At a press briefing, the new Finance chief said he will not pursue his predecessor's proposals to tax junk food and increase excise taxes on sweetened beverages.

"There are no plans of imposing additional new taxes. I think our first job is to collect what is on the table. That's why we are planning with the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) and the Bureau of Customs (BoC) commissioners to improve efficiency," Mr. Recto said.

Amid the current economic challenges, he said the government should not rely solely on implementing new or additional taxes.

"Inflation is high. When you impose taxes, that is also inflationary. So, I don't think that now

is the time to impose very high taxes," Mr. Recto added.

Inflation remains elevated amid rising food and energy costs. In 2023, full-year inflation stood at a 14-year high of 6%. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) sees inflation easing to 3.7% this year.

Mr. Recto said the Department of Finance (DoF) is currently in the process of "fine-tuning" the current tax proposals to take into account these inflationary pressures. These fine-tuned tax proposals will be presented before the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory

Council by Thursday, and to senators by next week.

"The fine-tuning (of these tax proposals) will be on what is fairer, number one. What is easy to collect, number two. What is practical, number three. That's how we're looking at it," the Finance chief said.

Mr. Recto said there are no plans to impose any new consumption-based taxes for at least this year.

He is not keen on pushing for a tax on junk food and an increase in excise taxes on sugary drinks, which were proposed by then-Finance Secretary Benjamin E. Diokno.

"I don't think that's on the table.. Those two proposals were in one proposal which was scrapped by the DoF and I don't intend to put it back," he said.

Mr. Recto also said the DoF is tempering the proposed hike in motor vehicle user charges, which was approved on third reading at the House of Representatives in December.

"Today, 50% or thereabouts of vehicles are unregistered. If you impose higher taxes, maybe more vehicles will not register. I think we have to temper some of these in-

creases because like I said, they're also inflationary," he added.

Meanwhile, Mr. Recto also said that he supports the current version of the military and uniformed personnel (MUP) reform, which requires only new entrants to contribute to the pension fund.

"The government has a social contract with our MUPs. And based on the law, we promised them a certain pension. So, I think the government should respect that," he said, noting the Senate version reflects that stance.

Taxes, S1/5

First Islamic banking unit in Philippines set to open

By Keisha B. Ta-asan Reporter

THE PHILIPPINES' first Islamic banking unit will soon be operational this month in Cotabato City, an official from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said.

BSP Deputy Governor Chuchi G. Fonacier said there are a lot of players, both foreign and domestic, that are interested in setting up an Islamic bank or an Islamic banking unit (IBU) in the Philippines.

"(The BSP) already granted an Islamic banking license to a particular branch that will open soon in Cotabato. I think, within this month, it will open," she said, adding that the bank will be releasing more details soon.

In July last year, Ms. Fonacier said one traditional lender has been given license to do Islamic banking for a particular branch in Mindanao.

Before the Monetary Board gave its first IBU license, the Philippines only had one Islamic bank. This is the state-owned Al Amanah Islamic Investment Bank, which is a subsidiary of the Development Bank of the Philippines and created by a presidential decree in 1973.

At the same time, Ms. Fonacier said a branch of a foreign bank is also interested in doing Islamic banking in the Philippines to cater to the unserved Muslim market in Mindanao.

The central bank has been encouraging lenders to get into Islamic banking after the sector was opened to new players.

In April 2022, the BSP issued Circular No. 1173, which approved the modified minimum capitalization requirement for conventional banks with an IBU.

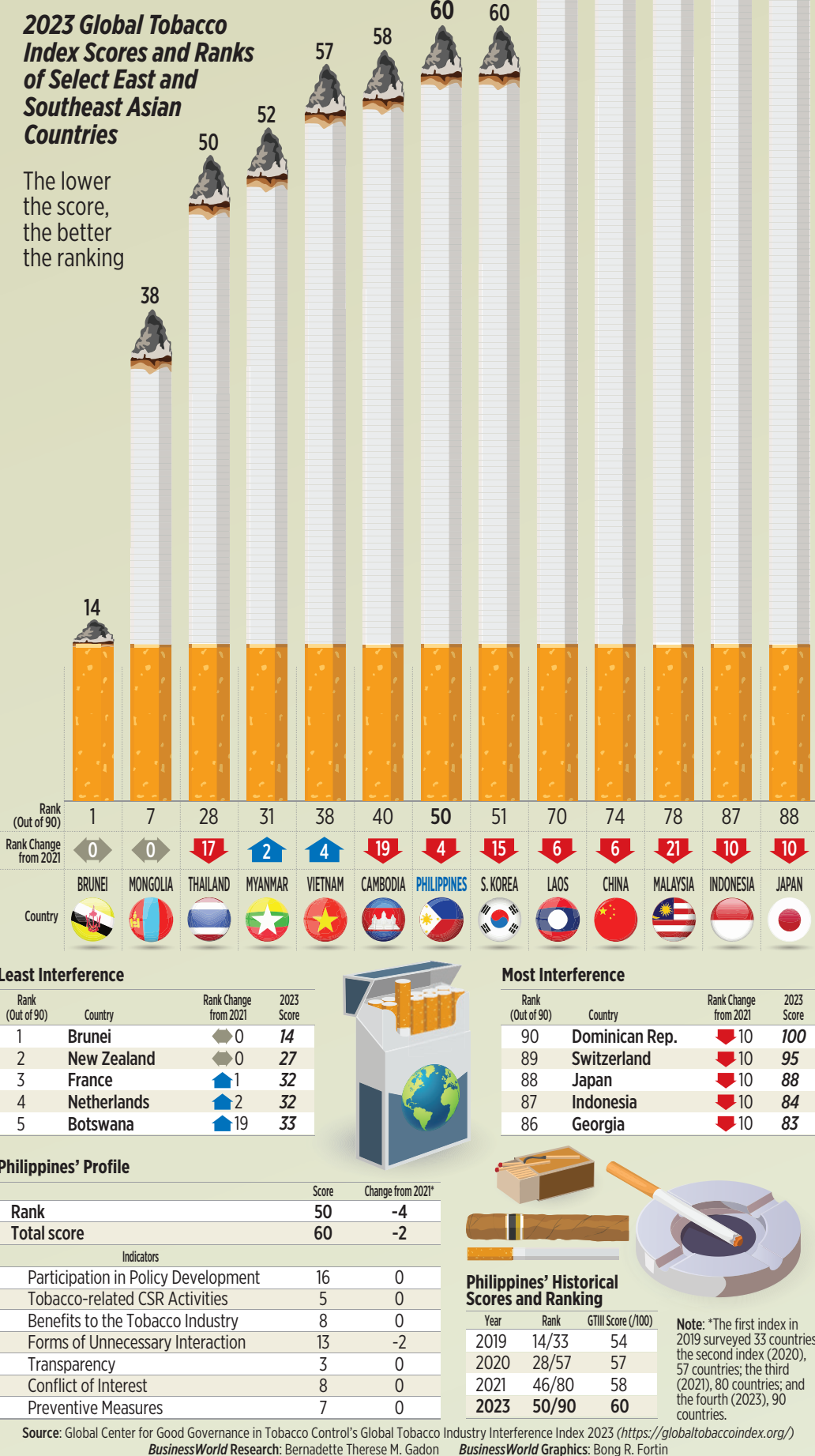
The goal of the circular was to provide flexibility in licensing an IBU of qualified traditional banks and give more Filipinos access to Shari'ah-compliant banking products and services.

Under the guidelines, conventional commercial banks or subsidiary banks of a universal bank that meet the minimum capital requirement for their respective banking category are allowed to operate an IBU within a transitory period not exceeding five years.

Islamic bank, S1/9

PHILIPPINES SLIPS IN TOBACCO INDUSTRY INFLUENCE RANKINGS

The Philippines slipped four places to 50th out of 90 countries with a score of 60 (out of a possible 100) in the 2023 edition of the Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index (GTII) by Global Center for Good Governance in Tobacco Control. The index ranks how governments in each country are responding to tobacco industry interference and protecting their public health policies from commercial and vested interests. This was the country's lowest ranking since the index started in 2019.



Economic czar backs move to return to pre-CREATE regime

PRESIDENTIAL INVESTMENT adviser Frederick D. Go said he is making it a priority to address investor concerns by implementing reforms such as restoring the power of the investment promotion agencies (IPAs) to grant incentives and simplifying value-added tax (VAT) rules for locators in economic zones.

The head of the Office of the Special Assistant to the President for Investment and Economic Affairs (OSAPIEA) on Wednesday said he is spearheading reforms and programs to make sure the Philippines becomes globally competitive.

In particular, Mr. Go said his office is working with Congress to tweak provisions of the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) law and Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion law.

"Both laws have generated serious concerns for foreign direct investors, particularly exporters, and I have put this on top of our to-do list. So, we are working with Congress to bring back certainty in our laws, providing confidence to investors of predictability and firm implementation of policies that protect their investments," he said at the Ease of Doing Business Briefing organized by the Anti-Red Tape Authority.

Mr. Go said he wants to give back IPAs their "powers" over locators in their economic zones, in order to "protect companies from regulatory inconsistencies and ambiguities and excessive bureaucracy and red tape."

"This will reduce the processing time for incentive applications and revert us back to the pre-CREATE regime," he added.

Economic czar, S1/9

BSP targets to complete a blueprint for cross-border payments this year

THE BANGKO SENTRAL ng Pilipinas (BSP) is targeting to complete a blueprint for instant cross-border payments this year, which is expected to be one of the more affordable multinational remittance services in the market, according to an official.

"The BSP is working on cross-border payments. We will be completing the blueprint of this scheme this year," BSP Deputy Governor Mamerto E. Tangonan said.

The central bank is targeting to implement cross-border payment connectivity in the next two years as it seeks to keep up with its Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) peers.

In March last year, the BSP and four other central banks in the region announced they will connect their domestic instant payment systems (IPS) through the Bank for International Settlements' (BIS) Nexus Project.

The Nexus, a prototype developed by the BIS Innovation Hub Singapore Centre, connects payment system operators with the Eurosystem's TARGET Instant Payment Settlement (TIPS), Malaysia's Real-time Retail Payments Platform (RPP) and Singapore's Fast and Secure Transfers (FAST).

In November 2022, the BSP signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with other central banks in the

ASEAN region to strengthen collaboration on regional payment connectivity (RPC).

The RPC is expected to contribute to accelerating economic recovery and promoting growth as it aims to foster a more inclusive financial ecosystem by enabling fast, seamless, and cheaper cross-border payments across the region.

The cooperation will include a number of modalities, including quick response (QR) code and fast payments.

According to Mr. Tangonan, Filipinos who have their own domestic e-wallet accounts or bank accounts, will be able to send money in local currency to a counterparty in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Indonesia.

"We have a large Filipino community based in Singapore. We anticipate that this will bring a lot of benefits for them because we're working to make this one of the least expensive cross-border remittance service in the market," he said.

He also said cross-border fund transfers may start first with person-to-person (P2P) transactions, before the BSP can do merchant payments.

For merchant payments, Mr. Tangonan said that if a Filipino goes to another country in the ASEAN region, there would be no need to convert pesos into other currencies. —

Keisha B. Ta-asan

FULL STORY

Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link

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