

STOCK MARKET		ASIAN MARKETS				WORLD MARKETS				PESO-DOLLAR RATES				ASIAN MONIES-US\$ RATE				WORLD CURRENCIES				DUBAI CRUDE OIL	
PSEi OPEN: 6,838.03 HIGH: 6,910.29 LOW: 6,838.03 CLOSE: 6,853.29 VOL.: 2.207 B VAL(P): 6.296 B 30.97 pts. 0.45% 30 DAYS TO MARCH 18, 2024		MARCH 18, 2024 JAPAN (NIKKEI 225) 39,740.44 ▲ 1,032.80 2.67 HONG KONG (HANG SENG) 16,737.12 ▲ 16.23 0.10 TAIWAN (WEIGHTED) 19,879.85 ▲ 197.35 1.00 THAILAND (SET INDEX) 1,386.17 ▲ 0.13 0.01 S.KOREA (KSE COMPOSITE) 2,685.84 ▲ 19.00 0.71 SINGAPORE (STRAITS TIMES) 3,172.24 ▲ -0.72 -0.02 SYDNEY (ALL ORDINARIES) 7,675.80 ▲ 5.50 0.07 MALAYSIA (KLSE COMPOSITE) 1,553.64 ▲ 0.81 0.05				MARCH 15, 2024 Dow Jones 38,714.770 ▼ -190.890 NASDAQ 15,973.174 ▼ -155.355 S&P 500 5,117.090 ▼ -33.390 FTSE 100 7,727.420 ▼ -15.730 Euro Stoxx50 4,374.300 ▼ -22.590				FX OPEN P55.650 HIGH P55.515 LOW P55.700 CLOSE P55.580 W.AVE. P55.614 VOL. \$1,011.75 M SOURCE : BAP 5.00 cts 30 DAYS TO MARCH 18, 2024				MARCH 18, 2024 LATEST BID (0900GMT) JAPAN (YEN) 149.200 ▼ 149.020 HONG KONG (HK DOLLAR) 7.820 ▲ 7.822 TAIWAN (NT DOLLAR) 31.675 ▲ 31.606 THAILAND (BAHT) 35.970 ▼ 35.860 S. KOREA (WON) 1,334.100 ▼ 1,330.630 SINGAPORE (DOLLAR) 1.358 — 1.358 INDONESIA (RUPIAH) 15,685 ▼ 15,590 MALAYSIA (RINGGIT) 4.716 ▼ 4.702				MARCH 18, 2024 US\$/UK POUND 1.2738 ▲ 1.2739 US\$/EURO 1.0896 ▼ 1.0887 US\$/AUSTRALIAN DOLLAR 0.6566 ▲ 0.6560 CANADA DOLLAR/US\$ 1.3526 ▼ 1.3541 SWISS FRANC/US\$ 0.8834 ▼ 0.8835				FUTURES PRICE ON NEAREST MONTH OF DELIVERY \$84.79/BBL ▲ \$0.64 30 DAYS TO MARCH 15, 2024	

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE'S 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS BY VALUE TURNOVER • MARCH 18, 2024 (PSEi snapshot on S1/2; article on S2/2)

MBT	P66.500	BDO	P153.000	BPI	P120.500	ICT	P307.200	AC	P660.000	SM	P980.000	AP	P37.500	URC	P104.700	AEV	P47.800	SMPH	P31.500
Value	P604,981,747	Value	P497,067,890	Value	P373,133,615	Value	P352,318,466	Value	P213,564,240	Value	P213,017,815	Value	P195,862,805	Value	P152,507,831	Value	P123,661,060	Value	P122,313,840
P4.250	▲ 6.827%	P5.000	▲ 3.378%	P2.100	▲ 1.774%	-P7.800	▼ -2.476%	-P1.500	▼ -0.227%	-P1.000	▼ -0.102%	-P1.800	▼ -4.580%	-P2.100	▼ -1.966%	-P0.900	▼ -1.848%	P0.250	▲ 0.800%

Gov't, SMC-led group ink NAIA deal

By Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza and Ashley Erika O. Jose
Reporters

THE PHILIPPINES is banking on the multibillion-peso makeover

of its major international airport — one of the worst in the world — to boost the economy through increased flights and tourism receipts, according to President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.

“This undertaking is not just about revenues that will be re-

mitted to the Treasury alone,” he said in a speech during the signing ceremony in Malacañang on Monday. “It is an investment in our future.”

The upgrade of the aging and congested Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) is part of

the Marcos government’s push to tap the private sector in improving the nation’s major infrastructure and ease the state’s fiscal burden.

The P170.6-billion public-private partnership (PPP) project, which took a record-breaking six

weeks to be awarded to the consortium led by San Miguel Corp. (SMC), will increase the airport’s capacity by 77% to 62 million passengers yearly.

“But we did not sacrifice scrutiny for speed,” Mr. Marcos said. “It was fast, but it was also fastidi-

ously examined at every step of the way. It was open, transparent, and competitive.”

The consortium, composed of San Miguel Holdings Corp.; RMM Asian Logistics, Inc.; RLW Aviation Development, Inc.; and NAIA, SI/10

FUEL PRICE TRACKER

(week-on-week change)

GASOLINE	
March 5	▲ P0.50
March 12	▼ P0.50
March 19	▲ P0.10
DIESEL	
March 5	▼ P0.40
March 12	▼ P0.25
March 19	▼ P0.10
KEROSENE	
March 5	▼ P0.35
March 12	▼ P0.30
March 19	— P0.00

• March 19, 12:01 a.m. — Caltex Philippines
 • March 19, 6 a.m. — Petron Corp.; Phoenix Petroleum; Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp.; PTT Philippines Corp.; Seacell Philippines, Inc.
 • March 19, 8:01 a.m. — Cleanfuel (Shaw Autogas, Inc.)

BIR sets higher income tax, VAT collection goals for 2024

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue (BIR) is aiming to increase income tax and value-added tax (VAT) collections this year amid the government’s efforts to improve tax administration and efficiency.

Data from the BIR showed that more than half or P1.65 trillion of the agency’s P3.055-trillion target this year will come from taxes on net income and profits.

This is 25% higher than the P1.32-trillion target it set for this tax type in 2023, and 18% more than the P1.4-trillion actual collection.

The agency is also targeting to collect P599.2 billion in VAT, which is 11% higher than the P538.1-billion goal for 2023.

Meanwhile, excise tax collections are also expected to reach P326.2 billion this year. This is 2.9% lower than the P336.1-billion target last year, but 11% higher than the P292.981 billion in actual excise tax collection.

The agency is also targeting to collect P163.2 billion in percentage taxes, up by 31% from its P124.6-billion goal last year.

It is also aiming to raise P229.2 billion in other taxes this year under BIR operations.

Under non-BIR operations, the agency is seeking to raise P72.1 billion from net income and profit taxes and P15.9 billion from other taxes.

By implementing office, the BIR is expected to collect P1.84 trillion through the Large Taxpayer Service.

In 2023, BIR collections rose by 7.6% year on year to P2.52 trillion but fell short of its P2.64-trillion target. This was primarily attributed to the change in the schedule of VAT return filings from monthly to quarterly.

The agency collects about 70% of government revenue. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocoson**

SURFSHARK PHILIPPINES 26TH MOST BREACHED COUNTRY IN Q4 2023

The Philippines ranked 26th out of 250 countries and territories with a total of 139,886 breached accounts in the October-to-December period last year, the latest data from Surfshark’s Data Breach Statistics showed. This was up by 134.1% from the third quarter. It made the country the fifth-most breached country in the East and Southeast Asia in the fourth quarter.

Top 5			Bottom 5		
Q4 2023 Rank (250)	Country/Territory	Q4 2023 Total Breaches	Q4 2023 Rank (250)	Country/Territory	Q4 2023 Total Breaches
1	United States	31,757,637	250	Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba	16
2	Russia	24,092,471	249	Heard and McDonald Islands	24
3	France	2,013,048	248	Bouvet Island	27
4	United Kingdom	1,514,943	247	St. Barthelemy	28
5	Italy	1,055,060	246	Pitcairn	30

NOTES:
 — Data breach pertains to incidents in which data are held by another party be it a person, company, etc. It is also defined when data are viewed, accessed, and stolen by unauthorized third parties. Surfshark defines data breach as an occurrence when an intruder leaks or copies user data such as names, surnames, e-mail addresses, passwords, and others.
 — Latest update as of Jan. 29, 2024.

Source: Surfshark’s Data Breach Statistics Q4 2023
 BusinessWorld Research: Marijdel Irish U. Catilogo
 BusinessWorld Graphics: Bong R. Fortin

External debt service burden soars to P14.7 billion in 2023

THE PHILIPPINES’ external debt service burden skyrocketed to P14.752 billion last year, data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) showed.

Preliminary data from the central bank showed that the country’s debt service burden on its external borrowings surged by 73.9% last year from the P8.483 billion recorded at end-2022.

The debt service burden refers to the amount of money a country needs to pay back its foreign creditors.

As of end-2023, the debt service burden was equivalent to 3.4% of gross domestic product (GDP), higher than the 2.1% ratio as of end-2022.

BSP data showed principal payments climbed by 67.2% to P7.713 billion last year from P4.613 billion as of end-2022.

Interest payments jumped by 81.8% to P7.039 billion last year from P3.871 billion as of end-2022.

Earlier data from the BSP showed that the country’s outstanding external debt hit a record-high \$125.4 billion at the end of December. This was higher by 12.7% from \$111.3 billion at end-2022 and up by 5.5% from \$118.8 billion as of end-September.

The external debt ratio, or share of external debt to GDP, stood at 28.7% in the fourth quarter. This was higher than 28.1% in the third quarter and the 27.5% ratio as of end-2022.

The debt service ratio, or principal and interest payments as a fraction of export receipts and primary income, increased to 10.2% in 2023 from 6.3% in the previous year.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said that the external debt service burden rose sharply due to higher interest rates.

“Higher inflation also bloated some government expenditures and somewhat led to wider budget deficits than otherwise, all of which also led to higher local and foreign debt servicing bill,” he said in a Viber message.

Inflation averaged 6% in 2023, exceeding the central bank’s 2-4% target range.

The BSP was one of the most aggressive central banks in the region last year, as it raised borrowing costs by a total of 450 basis points (bps) from May 2022 to October 2023 to tame inflation. This brought the benchmark rate to near 17-year high of 6.5%.

“For the coming months, possible Fed rate cuts later in 2024 that could be matched locally could help ease the country’s external and local debt service burden in terms of lower interest expenses on foreign and local debts, going forward,” Mr. Ricafort said. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocoson**

Baguio City logs highest GDP per capita among provinces, HUCs

THE CITY of Baguio posted the highest gross domestic product (GDP) per capita in 2022 among provinces and highly urbanized cities (HUCs) in the Philippines, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

The PSA published on Monday the results of the Provincial Product Accounts (PPA) of the 16 pilot regions outside Metro Manila which covered 82 provinces and 17 HUCs from November to December 2023.

The report showed most of the provinces and HUCs reported higher GDP per capita — the estimated average contribution of an individual to the GDP — in 2022.

The City of Baguio had the highest GDP per capita, which reached P420,016 or 2.3 times higher than the national average of P178,751.

This was followed by the City of Cagayan de Oro with P343,936 GDP per capita and the City of Lapu-Lapu with P313,039.

Completing the top 10 are the City of Iloilo (P306,444), Bataan (P297,930), Cebu (P293,426), Laguna (P287,280), City of Mandaue (P274,376), City of Davao (P258,811), and Batanes (P251,955).

The PSA noted that the rest of the top 10 had also reported GDP per capita higher than the national average of P178,751.

ING Bank N.V. Manila Senior Economist Nicholas Antonio T. Mapa said that Baguio had the highest GDP per capita in 2022 can be attributed to the boost in tourist activity as the city reopened.

“Reopening of the economy likely helped bolster economic activity,” he said in a Viber message.



WORKERS transport crates at a food market in Baguio City, April 17, 2016.

The PPA also showed Aklan recorded the fastest annual growth rate in terms of GDP per capita at 21.5% in 2022.

This was followed by the City of Puerto Princesa with 12.8%, the City of Tacloban with 12.1%, Nueva Vizcaya with 12% and Sorsogon with 11.1%.

Rounding out the top 10 fastest-growing provinces and HUCs were Davao Oriental (11%), City of Lapu-Lapu (11%), Batanes (10.7%), City of Baguio (10.5%), and Zamboales (9.6%).

“The top 10 provinces and HUCs recorded growths faster than the national per capita GDP growth rate of 6.2%,” the PSA said.

The country’s economic output in 2022 stood at 7.6%, the fastest economic growth since the 8.8% expansion in 1976. However, in 2023, GDP was 5.6%, below the government’s full-year target of 6-7%.

In 2023, the Philippines GDP per capita growth stood at 4.3%, reaching P186,496. — **Abigail Marie P. Yraola**