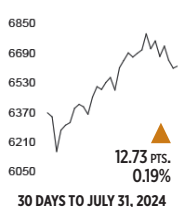


STOCK MARKET		ASIAN MARKETS				WORLD MARKETS		PESO-DOLLAR RATES		ASIAN MONIES-US\$ RATE		WORLD CURRENCIES		DUBAI CRUDE OIL	
<div><p>12.73 Pts. 0.19%</p><p>30 DAYS TO JULY 31, 2024</p></div>	<div><p><b>PSEi</b></p><p>OPEN: 6,599.97</p><p>HIGH: 6,640.17</p><p>LOW: 6,597.87</p><p>CLOSE: 6,619.09</p><p>VOL.: 0.421 B</p><p>VAL(P): 5.621 B</p></div>	JULY 31, 2024				JULY 30, 2024		FX		JULY 31, 2024 LATEST BID (0900GMT)		JULY 31, 2024		FUTURES PRICE ON NEAREST MONTH OF DELIVERY	

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SI/1-12 • 2 SECTIONS, 16 PAGES

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE'S 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS BY VALUE TURNOVER • JULY 31, 2024 (PSEi snapshot on SI/2; article on SI/2)

<b>BDO</b>	<b>P137.000</b>	<b>ALI</b>	<b>P29.500</b>	<b>SM</b>	<b>P908.000</b>	<b>ICT</b>	<b>P356.000</b>	<b>ACEN</b>	<b>P5.490</b>	<b>BPI</b>	<b>P121.300</b>	<b>SEVN</b>	<b>P124.100</b>	<b>TEL</b>	<b>P1,515.000</b>	<b>SMPH</b>	<b>P28.800</b>	<b>MBT</b>	<b>P68.700</b>
Value	P722,777,252	Value	P539,360,705	Value	P466,716,940	Value	P374,133,916	Value	P280,643,095	Value	P250,740,203	Value	P217,918,328	Value	P205,013,420	Value	P203,259,940	Value	P171,194,610
P0.500	▲ 0.366%	-P0.550	▼ -1.830%	P1.000	▲ 0.110%	P3.000	▲ 0.850%	P0.250	▲ 4.771%	-P0.800	▼ -0.655%	P0.700	▲ 0.567%	P22.000	▲ 1.474%	-P0.450	▼ -1.538%	P0.700	▲ 1.029%

# BSP sees July inflation at 4%-4.8%

By **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jacson** Reporter

HEADLINE INFLATION may have accelerated in July, possibly ending seven straight months of within-target inflation, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said on Wednesday. The central bank's month-ahead forecast showed that inflation likely settled within the 4%-to-4.8% range in July.

This would be faster than the 3.7% print in June. Inflation stood at 4.7% in July 2023. Inflation has been within the 2-4% target from December 2023 to June 2024. The central bank previously said that inflation could temporarily overshoot the target band in July before returning to target by August. The Philippine Statistics Authority is scheduled to release July inflation data on Aug. 6.

“Higher electricity rates along with the increased prices for agricultural commodities like vegetables, meat, and fruits along with higher domestic oil prices are the primary sources of upward price pressures for the month,” the BSP said. In July, households served by Manila Electric Co. saw an upward adjustment of P2.1496 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) in the electricity rate for the month. This brought the overall rate for a typical household to P11.6012 from

the previous month's P9.4516 per kWh. Pump price adjustments stood at a net increase of P1.30 a liter for gasoline for the month of July. Meanwhile, diesel and kerosene had a net decrease of P0.90 and P1.70, respectively, per liter. “These factors are expected to be offset in part by lower rice and fruit prices along with the peso appreciation,” the BSP said. The average price of a kilogram of well-milled rice ranged from P45-

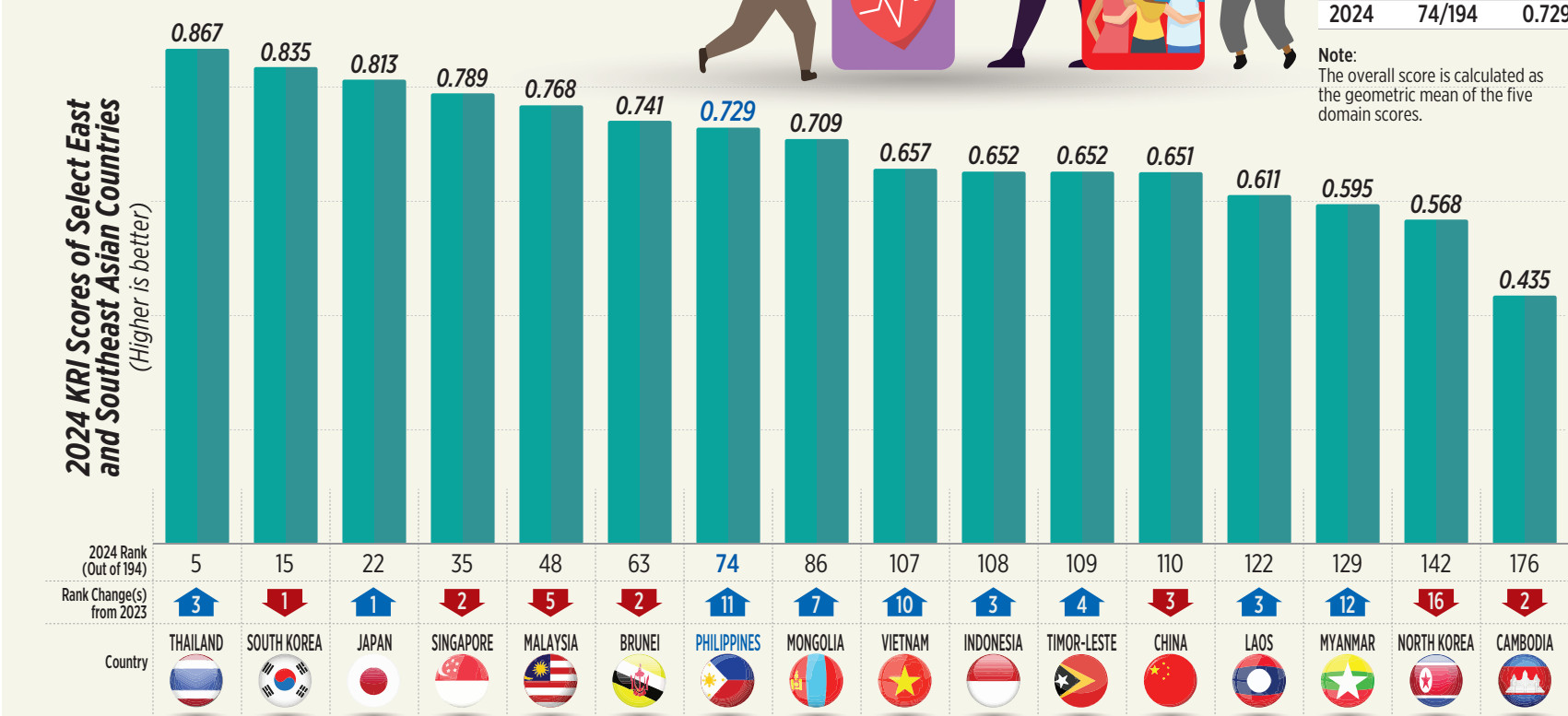
P55 as of end July from P48-P55 at end-June. Regular milled rice was priced at P45-P50 from P45-P52. Rice inflation eased to 22.5% in June from 23% a month ago, marking the third straight month of slower rice inflation. The peso appreciated to P58.365 per dollar on July 31, strengthening by 24.5 centavos from its P58.61 finish on June 28. **WITHIN TARGET?** Meanwhile, analysts expect in-

flation to accelerate month on month but still see it settling within the 2-4% target range. “Headline inflation may fall within target again in July, reaching 3.8%, with price pressures fading at a more favorable pace to start the second half of the year,” Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. (Metrobank) Chief Economist Nicholas Antonio T. Mapa said in the bank's latest Wealth Insights report.

*Inflation, SI/4*

## KidsRights Index HOW FILIPINO CHILDREN'S RIGHTS COMPARE WITH ITS PEERS IN THE REGION

The Philippines climbed by 11 notches to 74<sup>th</sup> out of 194 countries in the 2024 edition of the KidsRights Index (KRI) by the KidsRights Foundation, in collaboration with Erasmus University Rotterdam's School of Economics and the International Institute of Social Studies. The country scored 0.729 on a scale of 0.01 to 1, where a higher score means a positive contribution to children's rights. The index assesses and ranks how countries adhere to and are equipped to improve children's rights based on five domains: the right to life, health, education, protection, and environment for child rights.



Philippines' Historical Performance		
Year	Rank	Score
2013	63/165	0.724
2014	59/165	0.725
2015	77/165	0.760
2016	73/163	0.791
2017	54/165	0.776
2018	83/182	0.744
2019	72/181	0.759
2020	80/182	0.754
2021	79/182	0.760
2022	70/185	0.756
2023	85/193	0.732
2024	74/194	0.729

Note: The overall score is calculated as the geometric mean of the five domain scores.

Philippines' Performance (2024)		
Domain	Rank (Out of 194)	Score (Out of 1)
<b>Overall</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>0.729</b>
Life	123	0.742
Health	137	0.728
Education	100	0.689
Protection	90	0.861
Child Rights Environment	28	0.643

Top 10		
2024 Rank (Out of 194)	Country	Score (Out of 1)
1	Luxembourg	0.885
2	Iceland	0.884
3	Greece	0.878
4	Germany	0.874
5	Thailand	0.867
6	Slovenia	0.861
7	Finland	0.859
8	Belgium	0.858
9	Denmark	0.858
10	Austria	0.854

Bottom 10		
2024 Rank (Out of 194)	Country	Score (Out of 1)
194	Afghanistan	0.209
193	South Sudan	0.224
192	Chad	0.244
191	Central African Rep.	0.266
190	Equatorial Guinea	0.290
189	Guinea	0.291
188	Madagascar	0.313
187	Niger	0.314
186	Dem. Rep. of the Congo	0.324
185	El Salvador	0.332

Source: KidsRights Foundation's KidsRights Index 2024 (<https://www.kidsrights.org/research/kidsrights-index/>)  
BusinessWorld Research: Karis Kasarinlan Paolo D. Mendoza and Abigail Marie P. Yraola  
BusinessWorld Graphics: Bong R. Fortin

## BPO, traditional firms likely to lift office market after POGO exit

By **Aubrey Rose A. Inosante** Reporter

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY and business process management companies as well as traditional offices are expected to pick up the slack as Philippine offshore gaming operators (POGOs) are set to vacate offices around the country, real estate consultants said.

Colliers Philippines on Wednesday said the POGO's office footprint in Metro Manila has already gone down to 489,000 square meters (sq.m.) in the first half, compared

with the 1.3 million sq.m. office spaces occupied by POGOs in 2019. “It is still the traditional office occupiers and the BPO (business process outsourcing) occupiers that are still propping up the office market,” Colliers Associate Director for Office Services Kevin R. Jara said during a briefing on Wednesday. Of the 387,000 sq.m. transactions recorded in the first half of the year, traditional offices accounted for 56%, while BPO firms accounted for 26% and POGOs made up 16%. Among the top five developers, which control 33% of Metro Manila office stock, their POGO exposure is limited to less than 5% of their portfolio.

*POGO, SI/11*

## BMI says Philippine consumer spending to accelerate this year

HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION is seen to accelerate this year amid easing inflation, Fitch Solutions' unit BMI said. “We hold a positive outlook for consumer spending in the Philippines in 2024 and 2025,” it said in its latest commentary. “While household spending already recovered to the pre-COVID levels in 2022, the rate of increase slowed in 2023. For 2024, we expect an acceleration, driven mostly by easing

inflationary pressures, a stable labor market and lower interest rates.” BMI expects household spending to expand by 6.2% this year. Household consumption, which accounts for more than three-fourths of economic output, rose by 4.6% in the first quarter. “Over 2025, household spending will hold steady, growing 5.9% year on year in real terms.”

*BMI, SI/4*

## Pascual resigns as Trade chief

TRADE Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual has resigned from his post to return to the private sector, according to the Presidential Communications Office (PCO). In a statement, the PCO said President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. accepted Mr. Pascual's resignation during a meeting at the Palace. “His focus on micro, small, and medium enterprises was absolutely correct, and we are beginning to see the fruits of that policy,” Mr. Marcos was quoted as saying. “We are sorry to lose him, but we respect his decision that this is the time for him to return to the private sector.” Mr. Pascual's resignation will take effect on Aug. 2.

In a separate statement, Mr. Pascual said that his role at the helm of the Department of Trade and Industry has been “one of the most challenging yet fulfilling experiences of (his) career.” “After much reflection, I have decided it is time for me to return to the private sector. There, my roles will allow me to continue contributing my expertise and experience while being able to spend quality time with my family,” he said. The PCO said the search for Mr. Pascual's successor will commence “immediately” “to ensure a seamless transition and continuity” in the department.

*Pascual, SI/4*

## Gov't looking to raise \$500 million from Samurai bonds

By **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz** Reporter

THE PHILIPPINE government is eyeing to raise about \$500 million (P29.22 billion) from an offering of Japanese yen-dominated bonds within the year, Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto said on Tuesday. Mr. Recto said the government is also targeting to issue euro bonds in the second half, alongside its planned offerings of yen- and dollar-denominated papers. “I think we will begin issuing the \$3 billion that we need to borrow this year soon,” he told reporters on the sidelines of an event late on Tuesday. “The process has started, I'll put it that way, because I signed (the authority) already.” The bonds will likely be issued in tranches within the year, with the Samurai bonds possibly issued last, Mr. Recto said. The government planned to borrow \$5 billion this year, of which \$2 billion was raised from the issuance of global bonds last May. The remaining \$3 billion has yet to be raised.

The Philippines last issued Samurai bonds in April 2022, raising ₱70.1 billion. “Based on our advisors, I think it is the optimum time to get lower rates. The idea is to do it to get the cheapest borrowing cost,” Mr. Recto said in mixed English and Filipino. Union Bank of the Philippines, Inc. Chief Economist Ruben Carlo O. Asuncion said the government will likely start borrowing once the Philippine and US central banks begin cutting rates. “Government will wait until cuts start coming in (both from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas and US Federal Reserve). With lower interest rates, this means cheaper debt, so you're looking at cost efficiency for government-issued debts,” he said in a Viber message. The Fed is expected to keep interest rates steady this week, but easing may start as early as September as inflation neared the 2% target. On the other hand, the BSP earlier signaled a potential 25-basis-point cut as early as August.

*Samurai bonds, SI/4*