



33rd EJAP-AYALA Business Journalism Awards
The 2023 Business News Source of the Year Award

STOCK MARKET	ASIAN MARKETS	WORLD MARKETS	PESO-DOLLAR RATES	ASIAN MONIES-US\$ RATE	WORLD CURRENCIES	DUBAI CRUDE OIL
6700 6450 6200 5950 5700 5450 192.02 PTS. 3.15% 30 DAYS TO FEBRUARY 5, 2025 PSEi OPEN: 6,102.49 HIGH: 6,282.07 LOW: 6,094.66 CLOSE: 6,281.08 VOL.: 0.674 B VAL(P): 7.503 B	FEBRUARY 5, 2025 CLOSE NET % JAPAN (NIKKEI 225) 38,831.48 ▲ 33.11 0.09 HONG KONG (HANG SENG) 20,597.09 ▼ -192.87 -0.93 TAIWAN (WEIGHTED) 23,161.58 ▲ 367.62 1.61 THAILAND (SET INDEX) 1,286.44 ▼ -14.58 -1.12 S.KOREA (KSE COMPOSITE) 2,509.27 ▲ 27.58 1.11 SINGAPORE (STRAITS TIMES) 3,817.49 ▼ -5.52 -0.14 SYDNEY (ALL ORDINARIES) 8,416.90 ▲ 42.90 0.51 MALAYSIA (KLCSE COMPOSITE) 1,574.51 ▲ 9.95 0.64	FEBRUARY 4, 2025 CLOSE NET DOW JONES 44,556.040 ▲ 134.130 NASDAQ 19,654.015 ▲ 262.060 S&P 500 6,037.880 ▲ 43.310 FTSE 100 8,570.770 ▼ -12.790 EURO STOXX50 4,577.550 ▲ 5.120	FX OPEN P58.050 HIGH P57.980 LOW P58.135 CLOSE P58.095 W.AVE. P58.071 VOL. \$1,818.50 M SOURCE : BAP 24.50 CTVS 30 DAYS TO FEBRUARY 5, 2025	FEBRUARY 5, 2025 LATEST BID (0900GMT) PREVIOUS JAPAN (YEN) 152.800 ▼ 155.160 HONG KONG (HK DOLLAR) 7.788 — 7.788 TAIWAN (NT DOLLAR) 32.820 ▲ 32.903 THAILAND (BAHT) 33.580 ▲ 33.820 S. KOREA (WON) 1,445.320 ▲ 1,457.680 SINGAPORE (DOLLAR) 1.349 ▲ 1.356 INDONESIA (RUPIAH) 16,280 ▲ 16,340 MALAYSIA (RINGGIT) 4.420 ▲ 4.445	FEBRUARY 5, 2025 CLOSE PREVIOUS US\$/UK POUND 1.2514 ▲ 1.2434 US\$/EURO 1.0408 ▲ 1.0342 US\$/AUST DOLLAR 0.6280 ▲ 0.6206 CANADA DOLLAR/US\$ 1.4283 ▼ 1.4436 SWISS FRANC/US\$ 0.9019 ▼ 0.9088	FUTURES PRICE ON NEAREST MONTH OF DELIVERY \$77.44/ BBL \$1.71 30 DAYS TO FEBRUARY 4, 2025

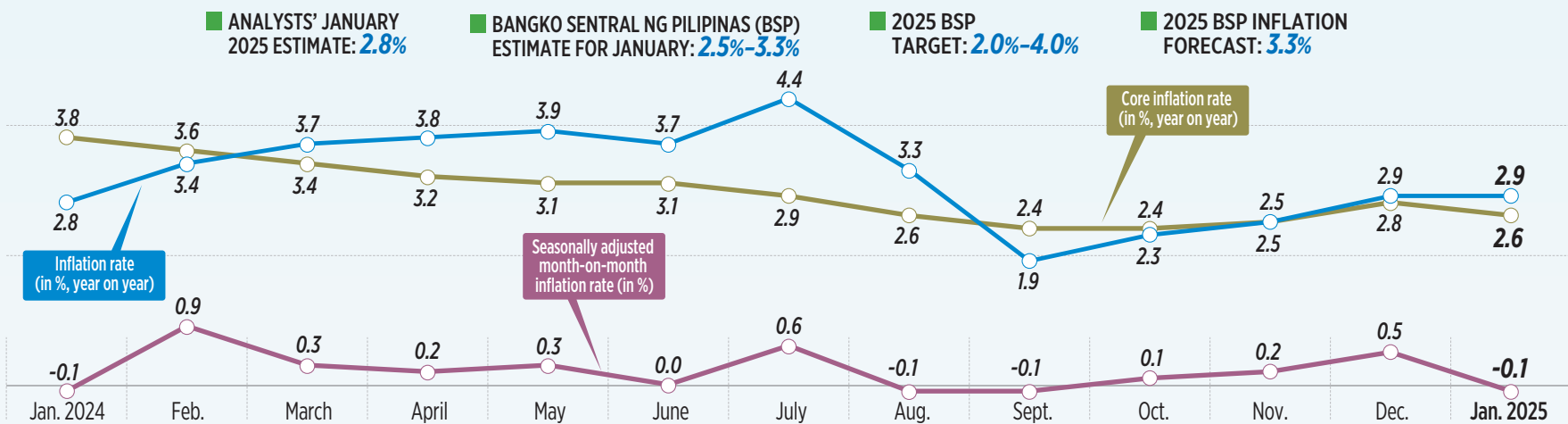
PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE'S 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS BY VALUE TURNOVER • FEBRUARY 5, 2025 (PSEi snapshot on S1/4; article on S2/2)

SMPH	P26.000	ICT	P378.000	BDO	P147.000	ALI	P25.900	CBC	P90.000	PLUS	P31.300	SM	P830.000	JFC	P244.600	MBT	P73.400	BPI	P127.800
Value	P972,869,110	Value	P665,336,370	Value	P623,926,603	Value	P443,139,835	Value	P440,018,854	Value	P349,139,765	Value	P278,708,075	Value	P253,900,806	Value	P244,022,186	Value	P235,805,180
P1.750	▲ 7.216%	P11.000	▲ 2.997%	P2.500	▲ 1.730%	P1.300	▲ 5.285%	-P2.000	▼ -2.174%	P1.400	▲ 4.682%	P44.000	▲ 5.598%	P9.600	▲ 4.085%	P1.600	▲ 2.228%	P3.500	▲ 2.816%

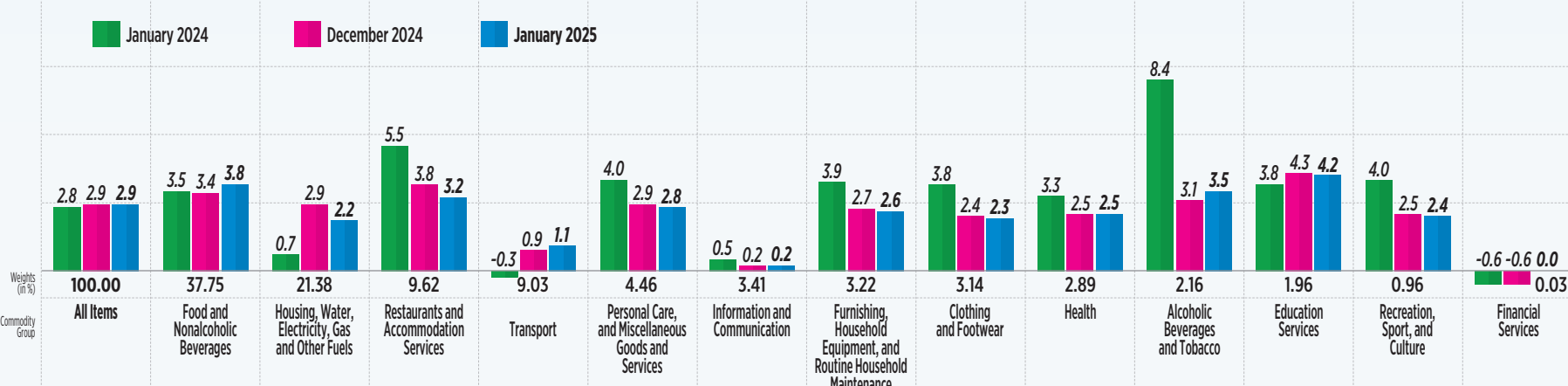
Inflation steady at 2.9% in January

INFLATION RATES IN THE PHILIPPINES

(as of January 2025)



ANNUAL INFLATION RATES, BY COMMODITY GROUP (in %)



Source: Philippine Statistics Authority (Preliminary data as of Feb. 5, 2025)

BusinessWorld Research: Matthew Miguel L. Castillo

BusinessWorld Graphics: Bong R. Fortin

By Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson Reporter

HEADLINE INFLATION remained steady in January as lower utility costs offset a spike in food prices, preliminary data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) showed.

The consumer price index (CPI) rose 2.9% year on year in January, the same as December. It also settled within the 2.5%-3.3% forecast from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

The January print was also slightly higher than the 2.8% median estimate in a *BusinessWorld* poll of 16 analysts.

“The latest inflation outturn is consistent with the BSP’s assessment that inflation will remain anchored to the target range over the policy horizon,” the central bank said in a statement.

Core inflation, which discounts volatile prices of food and fuel, settled at 2.6% during the month — slower than 2.8% in December and 3.8% a year ago.

The heavily weighted food and nonalcoholic beverage index remained the top contributor to the overall CPI in January, accounting for a 50.3% share, National Statistician Claire Dennis S. Mapa said.

Inflation, S1/5

Gas stations may be required to put up EV charging points this year

By Sheldeen Joy Talavera Reporter

THE Department of Energy (DoE) is looking to start requiring gas stations to have electric vehicle (EV) charging points this year, as part of efforts to boost EV adoption in the country.

Patrick T. Aquino, director at DoE - Energy Utilization Management Bureau, said that the department will release the draft issuance for comments and conduct public consultations within the year.

“The proposal is to require liquid fuel retail outlets (LFRO) to have electric vehicle charging points depending on the ratio of number of dispensing pumps,” Mr. Aquino told *BusinessWorld*.

“The operator of the LFRO can directly install, operate and maintain the EV charging point or allow a third party to do the same,” he added.

Mr. Aquino said that the DoE will be identifying priority areas for implementation, adding that it will be done in phases.

Asked on when the department targets to implement the policy, he said: “within the year.”

“The DoE is pushing for EV charging infra in LFRO to improve access and availability for EV users,” Mr. Aquino said.

Under the Republic Act No. 11697, otherwise known as the Electric Vehicle Industry Development Act (EVIDA), gasoline stations identified in the

Comprehensive Roadmap for the Electric Vehicle Industry (CREVI) are mandated to designate dedicated spaces for the installation of commercial use charging stations for the general public.

EVIDA aims to promote the development and adoption of EVs in the Philippines by mandating an increase in the share of EVs in corporate and government fleets, which is expected to generate more demand for EVs.

Under CREVI, the business-as-usual scenario target is a 10% EV fleet share by 2040, while it sets a clean energy scenario target of at least 50%.

According to the DoE, there are 104 DoE-accredited EV charging station providers nationwide as of November 2024.

Mr. Aquino said at present, there are EV charging points in some stations of Petron Corp., Unioil Petroleum Philippines, Inc., Seaoil Philippines, Inc., and Shell Pilipinas Corp.

Edmund A. Araga, president of Electric Vehicle Association of the Philippines, said that the policy is “a bold move” showing the government’s commitment to hit the targets under CREVI.

“We are optimistic that number of EVs will continue to increase by at least 20% as more consumers are now considering owning an EV in addressing issue on gas price increase,” Mr. Araga told *BusinessWorld* via Viber.

Mr. Araga said there are many EV brands in the market, allowing consumers to have a wider array of vehicles to choose from.

Gas stations, S1/5

Bicam report on capital markets reform OKd

THE SENATE and the House of Representatives on Wednesday ratified the bicameral conference report on a measure that seeks to cut the tax on stock transactions to 0.1% from 0.6%, a move that experts hope will boost the Philippine stock market.

At the same time, Congress also ratified the bicam report on the measure that will raise the capital of the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP).

“We have come up with a piece of legislation that seeks to promote capital market development, increase capital mobility, and enhance financial inclusion,” Senator Sherwin T. Gatchalian said, referring to the Capital Markets Efficiency Promotions Act.

“A more efficient capital market means more opportunities, greater financial inclusion, and stronger economy that works for all.

Mr. Gatchalian said lawmakers agreed to reduce the documentary stamp tax (DST) on original issue of shares of stock to 0.75% from 1% of the par value of the shares of stock.

It will also exempt DST on the original issuance, redemption or other disposition of shares or units of participation in a unit investment trust fund.

Mr. Gatchalian said the move would ease the financial burden on investors and allow them to maximize their earnings without needless taxes.

He said the bill will also introduce an allowable deduction of 50% of an employer’s contribution to their employees’ personal equity and retirement accounts, which would incentivize businesses to encourage workers to prepare for retirement.

A copy of the bicameral conference committee report of the measure was not immediately available.

Based on a forecast by the Philippine Stock Exchange, the lowering the stock transaction tax to 0.1% would boost stock market’s trading volume to P4.9 trillion by 2029.

Meanwhile, the Senate also ratified bicameral conference committee report of the new DBP charter, which would

boost the lender’s authorized capital stock to P300 billion from P35 billion.

The measure mandates that the National Government will own 70% of the DBP’s capital stock at all times, with P32 billion or 10.67% being fully subscribed to and paid for by the state. It will also allow the state-run lender to conduct an initial public offering.

“The increased capitalization could be provided to DBP which would give them heightened ability to issue more loans to fund critical projects for priority sectors such as infrastructure health social services and agriculture,” Senator Mark A. Villar, who sponsored the Senate bill, told the plenary floor.

A copy of the bicameral conference committee report on the DBP charter was not available.

“This proposed measure will enable the DBP to continuously support national development goals, ensuring that the benefits of these projects reach ordinary Filipinos in terms of job opportunities, better services, and improved livelihoods,” Mr. Villar said. — **John Victor D. Ordoñez**

Pangandaman says gov’t could adjust growth target if necessary

BUDGET Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman on Wednesday said the government’s 6-8% gross domestic product (GDP) growth target this year may be adjusted after underwhelming 2024 growth and global uncertainties.

“Let’s wait for it. Maybe, we need to adjust. So, if needed, we’ll do the necessary adjustment,” Ms. Pangandaman, who chairs the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC), told reporters on Wednesday.

The DBCC will conduct its first meeting this year in March.

“All the numbers are already in. We already saw our GDP, inflation, but our employment is still very good. We’ll wait for the others... There’s a policy meeting soon. So, once all the numbers are in, and then we’ll check what’s happening with our peers,” Ms. Pangandaman said.

The Philippine economy grew by a weaker-than-expected 5.6% in 2024, falling short of the government’s revised 6-6.5% target.

Asked if the country could hit 8% growth this year, Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto earlier told *BusinessWorld* that “6-6.5% [growth] is doable for 2025.”

Department of Budget and Management (DBM) Principal Economist and Undersecretary Joselito R. Basilio said the DBCC will likely retain the 6% lower band for 2025.

“Most likely retain. The lower part is firmer, meaning it won’t be lowered or raised anymore. Given the reasons for achieving the growth target, such as election spending, and agriculture is okay,” Mr. Basilio told reporters.

Mr. Pangandaman said they will also wait for the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas’ (BSP) next policy move.

“The BSP has its own thing. They also crunch their own numbers based on the international outlook... Let’s wait for it. Maybe we need to adjust,” she said.

BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr. over the weekend said they may cut interest rates by 50 basis points (bps) this year. He said the cuts could be delivered in increments of 25 bps each in the first and second half of the year.

The central bank began its easing cycle in August last year, slashing borrowing costs by a total of 75 bps to 5.75% by end-2024.

Meanwhile, Mr. Basilio said the DBCC could revise the revenue and expenditure program for this year to be “more realistic.”

“Depending on the condition in March. It will be there’s Trump on the outside. Then, our budget is still rolling to 2025. Then, depend-

ing on what the finalized revenue measures are,” Mr. Basilio said.

The DBCC expects revenues to hit P4.64 trillion in 2025, while expenditure program was set at P6.182 trillion.

It also kept the deficit ceiling at -5.3% of GDP for 2025.

USAID FREEZE

At the same time, Ms. Pangandaman said she does not see any downside risks yet associated with recent policies announced by US President Donald J. Trump.

“Nothing yet. As of now, it’s just the pronouncements and most of it is just the policy review of the existing orders and previous policy. So, we wait, we wait, we wait until we get their final agenda in this administration,” she said.

Growth target, S1/5