

STOCK MARKET	ASIAN MARKETS	WORLD MARKETS	PESO-DOLLAR RATES	ASIAN MONIES-US\$ RATE	WORLD CURRENCIES	DUBAI CRUDE OIL
<b>PSEI</b> OPEN: 6,151.30 HIGH: 6,168.33 LOW: 6,122.05 CLOSE: 6,124.09 20.87 PTS. 0.34% VOL.: 0.535 B 30 DAYS TO FEBRUARY 27, 2025 VAL(P): 6,349 B	<b>FEBRUARY 27, 2025</b> JAPAN (NIKKEI 225) 38,256.17 ▲ 113.80 0.30 HONG KONG (HANG SENG) 23,718.29 ▼ -69.64 -0.29 TAIWAN (WEIGHTED) 23,053.18 ▼ -349.37 -1.49 THAILAND (SET INDEX) 1,215.73 ▲ -51.41 -1.25 S. KOREA (KSE COMPOSITE) 2,621.75 ▼ -19.34 -0.73 SINGAPORE (STRAITS TIMES) 3,921.19 ▲ 13.14 0.34 SYDNEY (ALL ORDINARIES) 8,268.20 ▼ 27.50 0.33 MALAYSIA (KLSE Composite) 1,586.60 ▼ -2.11 -0.13	<b>FEBRUARY 26, 2025</b> DOW JONES 43,433.120 ▼ -188.040 NASDAQ 19,075.263 ▲ 48.877 S&P 500 5,956.060 ▲ 0.810 FTSE 100 8,731.460 ▲ 62.790 EURO STOXX 4,477.540 ▲ 36.890	<b>FX</b> OPEN P57.870 HIGH P57.850 LOW P57.920 CLOSE P57.910 W.AVE. P57.897 3.00 COTVS VOL. 1,066.20 M 30 DAYS TO FEBRUARY 27, 2025 SOURCE: BAP	<b>FEBRUARY 27, 2025</b> LATEST BID (0900GMT) JAPAN (YEN) 149.880 ▼ 149.380 HONG KONG (HK DOLLAR) 7.774 ▼ 7.773 TAIWAN (NT DOLLAR) 32.794 ▼ 32.791 THAILAND (BAHT) 33.890 ▼ 33.700 S. KOREA (WON) 1,443.250 ▼ 1,432.800 SINGAPORE (DOLLAR) 1.341 ▼ 1.337 INDONESIA (RUPIAH) 16,445 ▼ 16,365 MALAYSIA (RINGGIT) 4.441 ▼ 4.426	<b>FEBRUARY 27, 2025</b> CLOSE 1.2670 ▲ 1.2651 HIGH 1.2670 LOW 1.2651 CLOSE 0.6300 ▼ 0.6328 HIGH 0.6300 LOW 0.6328 CLOSE 1.4324 ▼ 1.4328 HIGH 1.4324 LOW 1.4328 CLOSE 0.8972 ▲ 0.8945 HIGH 0.8972 LOW 0.8945	<b>FUTURES PRICE ON NEAREST MONTH OF DELIVERY</b> \$76.25/BBL 88.00 83.20 80.40 77.60 74.80 72.00 \$1.55 30 DAYS TO FEBRUARY 26, 2025

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE'S 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS BY VALUE TURNOVER • FEBRUARY 27, 2025 (PSEI snapshot on S1/2; article on S2/2)

BDO P150,500 Value P1,022,433,275 P2.600 ▲ 1.758%	ALI P22,450 Value P631,554,470 -P0.050 ▼ -0.222%	URC P68.200 Value P332,919,372 -P2.800 ▼ -3.944%	ICT P340,000 Value P317,999,060 P0.000 — 0.000%	BPI P131,000 Value P233,840,788 -P1.000 ▼ -0.758%	AC P565,000 Value P221,826,235 -P15,000 ▼ -2.586%	JFC P266,000 Value P168,973,598 -P2,000 ▼ -0.746%	AP P40,500 Value P157,789,205 -P0.350 ▼ -0.857%	P40.500 Value P142,605,780 -P0.300 ▼ -0.817%	PLUS P36,400 Value P142,178,520 -P0.350 ▼ -1.434%	SMPH P24,050 Value P142,178,520 -P0.350 ▼ -1.434%
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## Budget gap exceeds full-year ceiling

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S (NG) budget deficit narrowed year on year in 2024, but overshot the target by 1.48%, the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) said.

Data from the Treasury released on Thursday showed that the budget deficit shrank by 0.38% or P5.7 billion to P1.503 trillion in 2024 from P1.512 trillion in 2023.

However, it exceeded the P1.48-trillion deficit ceiling set by the Development Budget Coordination Committee.

"The slight variance versus the P1.484-trillion deficit program was primarily due to a higher outturn in government spending including those charged to unprogrammed appropriation, as well as defrayment of accounts payables," the Treasury said.

As of end-2024, the deficit as a share of gross domestic product (GDP) settled at 5.7%, lower than 6.2% at end-2023 but slightly higher than the target of 5.6%.

BTr data showed revenue collection jumped by 15.56% to P4.42 trillion and exceeded its P4.27-trillion target due to better-than-expected nontax revenue collections.

"This is equivalent to 16.72% of GDP, the highest revenue effort in the last 27 years, since 1997," the Treasury said.

Tax revenues rose by an annual 10.83% to P3.8 trillion in 2024 but fell short of the P3.82-trillion target by 0.51%.

Collections by the Bureau of the Internal Revenue (BIR) increased by 13.29% year on year to P2.852 trillion, driven by increased value-added tax (VAT) collections. It surpassed the P2.849-trillion target by 0.09%.

On the other hand, the Bureau of Customs' (BoC) revenues went up by 3.79% to P916.7 billion in 2024 but fell short of the P939.7-billion target by 2.45%

The BTr attributed the lower Customs collections to the reduced tariff on rice

and selected electric vehicles, as well as the extension of lower tariffs on meat products.

"The increase is attributable to the growth across duties, VAT, and excise collections, which is among the effects of the bureau's strengthened digitization, inspection, and border protection efforts implemented during the year," the BTr said.

Budget gap, S1/9

## BSP seen to bring down RRR to zero by 2028

BIG BANKS' reserve requirements are seen to be slashed further to zero in the near term, Security Bank said.

"Our forecast is that even in the next couple of years, there will still be cuts," Security Bank Corp. Vice-President and Research Division Head Angelo B. Taningco said in mixed English and Filipino.

Mr. Taningco said they expect the central bank to reduce the reserve requirement ratio (RRR) by 200 basis points (bps) next year, 150 bps in 2027 and another 150 bps in 2028.

This would bring the current 5% reserve requirement for big banks to zero by 2028.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr. earlier said the central bank is eyeing to bring down banks' reserve requirements to zero before his term ends in 2029.

The BSP last week announced it will cut the RRR of universal and commercial banks and nonbank financial institutions with quasi-banking functions by 200 bps to 5% from 7%, effective March 28.

It will also reduce the RRR for digital banks by 150 bps to 2.5%, while the ratio for thrift lenders will be lowered by 100 bps to 0%.

Rural and cooperative banks' RRR has been at zero since October, the last time the BSP cut reserve requirements.

From a high of 20% in 2018, the central bank has since brought down the RRR to single-digit levels.

Further lowering reserve requirements could lead to further financial intermediation and make the usage of capital more efficient, Mr. Taningco said.

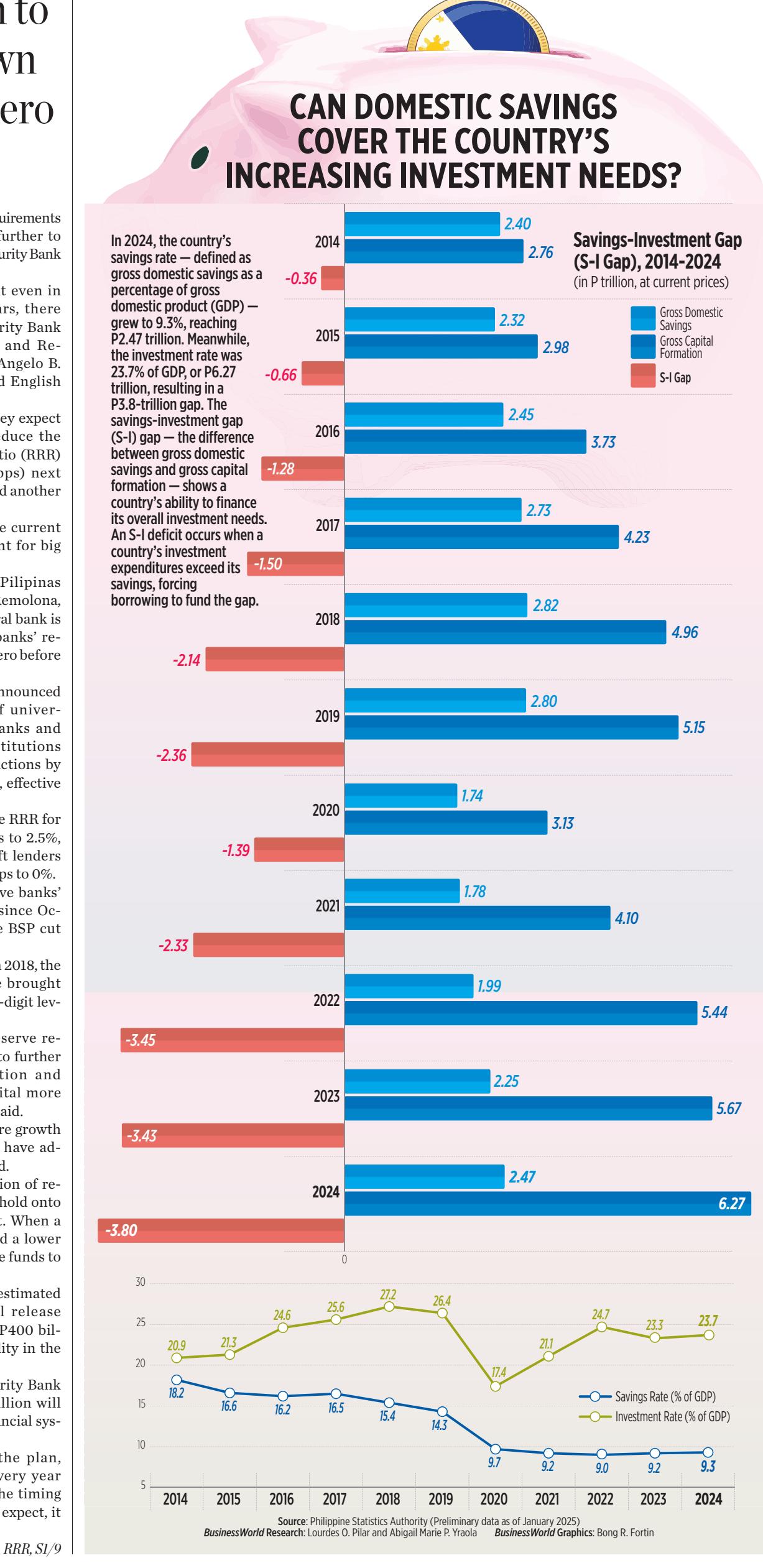
"It would lead to more growth prospects because you have additional funds," he added.

The RRR is the portion of reserves that banks must hold onto rather than lending out. When a bank is required to hold a lower reserve ratio, it has more funds to lend to borrowers.

Several economists estimated that the RRR cut will release P300 billion to nearly P400 billion of additional liquidity in the economy.

For this round, Security Bank estimated that P325 billion will be injected into the financial system.

"This was part of the plan, gradual (reduction) every year until it reaches zero. The timing was just what we didn't expect, it came a bit early."



## Thailand's planned casinos 'a big threat' to PHL, says PAGCOR

By Aubrey Rose A. Inosante  
Reporter

THE THAI government's plan to legalize casinos poses a "big threat" to the Philippine gaming industry, according to Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (PAGCOR) Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Alejandro H. Tengco.

At a briefing on Wednesday, Mr. Tengco said Thailand has an advantage as its tourist arrivals are bigger than the Philippines.

"It is a big threat. Why? Thailand had 35 million tourists, and the Philippines had less than six million," he said, referring to the international tourist arrival numbers in 2024.

The Thai Cabinet last month approved a draft law to legalize casinos in "entertainment complexes" to boost economic

growth. With this plan, the Thai government is looking to attract at least 100 billion baht (\$3 billion) in new investments, and to boost foreign tourist arrivals by as much as 10%.

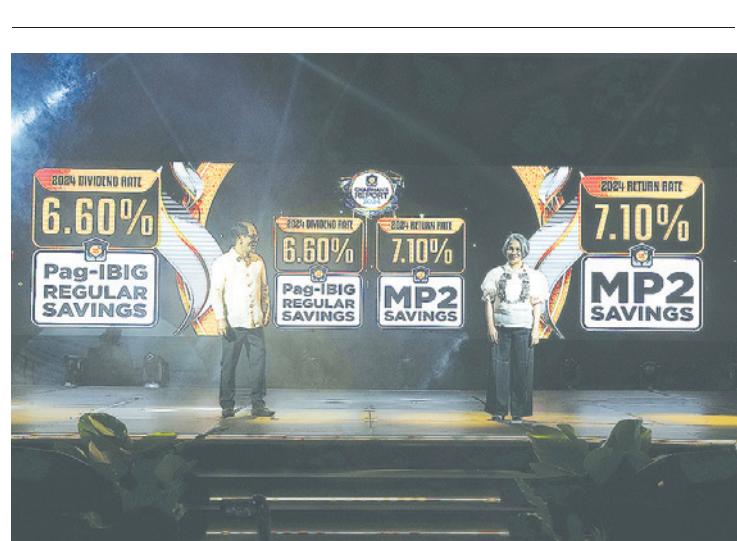
"Instead of coming to the Philippines to gamble, people might just go to Thailand," Mr. Tengco said.

Mr. Tengco also flagged possible competition from Japan's first casino-resort that is expected to open in Osaka by 2030.

"They might go to Osaka, Japan instead. That's why I'm saying we need to prepare well because competition is coming, and it's better if we get ahead of it," he said.

The Philippines' Las Vegas-style Entertainment City has been attracting local and foreign tourists. Several integrated resorts operate in the area, such as Solaire Resort & Casino, City of Dreams Manila and Okada Manila.

Thailand, S1/9



PAG-IBIG FUND Chairman and Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development Secretary Jose Rizalino Acuzar and PAG-IBIG Fund Chief Executive Officer Marilene Acosta announce the dividend rates for its savings program.

## PAG-IBIG Fund declares record-high dividends

THE HOME Development Mutual Fund or PAG-IBIG Fund has declared a record-high P55.65 billion in total dividends for its members' savings in 2024.

In a statement, PAG-IBIG Fund said this brought the dividend rate for its regular savings to 6.6%, while the rate for its modified PAG-IBIG 2 (MP2) savings went up to 7.1%.

The regular savings account is available to PAG-IBIG members who are currently employed or self-employed. The MP2 savings account is a voluntary savings program that offers higher dividend rates and has a five-year maturity period.

The PAG-IBIG Fund's board of trustees approved that 82% of net

income or P55.643 billion be declared as dividends for its members. This was higher than 70% of net income usually mandated to be declared as dividends.

The PAG-IBIG Fund's net income reached a record P67.52 billion in 2024, up by 36% from P49.79 billion last year driven by higher loans, collections, and investment returns.

PAG-IBIG Fund has once again marked 2024 as one of its best-performing years, achieving record highs in both total assets and net income," Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development Secretary Jose Rizalino Acuzar was quoted as saying.

PAG-IBIG, S1/10