



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		
<p>PSEi OPEN: 6,311.30 HIGH: 6,311.34 LOW: 6,156.97 CLOSE: 6,206.55 VOL.: 0.754 B VAL(P): 7.709 B 154.22 PTS. 2.42% 30 DAYS TO MARCH 11, 2025</p>	MARCH 11, 2025				MARCH 10, 2025		<p>FX OPEN P57.450 HIGH P57.200 LOW P57.500 CLOSE P57.225 W.AVE. P57.359 VOL. \$1,381.88 M SOURCE : BAP 18.50 CTS 30 DAYS TO MARCH 11, 2025</p>		MARCH 11, 2025 LATEST BID (0900GMT)		PREVIOUS		MARCH 11, 2025		<p>FUTURES PRICE ON NEAREST MONTH OF DELIVERY \$71.40/BBL \$0.56 30 DAYS TO MARCH 10, 2025</p>	
					CLOSE NET								CLOSE PREVIOUS			
					JAPAN (NIKKEI 225) 36,793.11 ▼ -235.16 -0.64		Dow Jones 41,911.710 ▼ -890.010		JAPAN (YEN) 147.280 ▼ 147.200		US\$/UK POUND 1.2923 ▲ 1.2897					
					HONG KONG (HANG SENG) 23,782.14 ▼ -1.35 -0.01		NASDAQ 17,468.321 ▼ -727.900		HONG KONG (HK DOLLAR) 7.769 ▼ 7.768		US\$/EURO 1.0903 ▲ 1.0838					
					TAIWAN (WEIGHTED) 22,071.09 ▼ -388.06 -1.73		S&P 500 5,614.560 ▼ -155.640		TAIWAN (NT DOLLAR) 32.879 ▼ 32.859		US\$/AUST DOLLAR 0.6286 ▼ 0.6322					
				THAILAND (SET INDEX) 1,187.14 ▲ 9.70 0.82		FTSE 100 8,600.220 ▼ -79.660		THAILAND (BAHT) 33.770 ▲ 33.780		CANADA DOLLAR/US\$ 1.4423 ▼ 1.4362						
				S.KOREA (KOSI COMPOSITE) 2,537.60 ▼ -32.79 -1.28		Euro Stoxx50 4,633.520 ▼ -61.230		S. KOREA (WON) 1,452.090 ▲ 1,454.020		SWISS FRANC/US\$ 0.8806 ▲ 0.8777						
				SINGAPORE (STRAITS TIMES) 3,828.47 ▼ -70.60 -1.81				SINGAPORE (DOLLAR) 1.331 — 1.331								
				SYDNEY (ALL ORDINARIES) 7,890.10 ▼ -72.20 -0.91				INDONESIA (RUPIAH) 16,400 ▼ 16,335								
				MALAYSIA (KLSE COMPOSITE) 1,520.15 ▼ -16.31 -1.06				MALAYSIA (RINGGIT) 4.410 ▼ 4.420								

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE'S 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS BY VALUE TURNOVER • MARCH 11, 2025 (PSEi snapshot SI/2; article on SI/2)

ALI Value P842,187,605 -P1.450 ▼ -6.170%	P22.050 Value P756,196,272 ▼ -P21.000 ▼ -5.385%	ICT Value P756,196,272 ▼ -P21.000 ▼ -5.385%	P369.000 Value P756,196,272 ▼ -P21.000 ▼ -5.385%	BPI Value P734,889,181 ▲ P0.900 ▲ 0.682%	P132.800 Value P734,889,181 ▲ P0.900 ▲ 0.682%	BDO Value P692,612,177 ▼ -P3.200 ▼ -2.025%	P154.800 Value P692,612,177 ▼ -P3.200 ▼ -2.025%	JFC Value P345,544,872 — P0.000 — 0.000%	P264.000 Value P345,544,872 — P0.000 — 0.000%	MER Value P304,964,340 ▼ -P17.000 ▼ -3.386%	P485.000 Value P304,964,340 ▼ -P17.000 ▼ -3.386%	PLUS Value P303,210,615 ▼ -P1.100 ▼ -2.933%	P36.400 Value P303,210,615 ▼ -P1.100 ▼ -2.933%	URC Value P203,894,969 ▼ -P3.250 ▼ -4.333%	P71.750 Value P203,894,969 ▼ -P3.250 ▼ -4.333%	SMPH Value P187,305,660 ▼ -P1.500 ▼ -6.000%	P23.500 Value P187,305,660 ▼ -P1.500 ▼ -6.000%	JGS Value P184,791,680 ▼ -P0.240 ▼ -1.310%	P18.080 Value P184,791,680 ▼ -P0.240 ▼ -1.310%
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BSP: April rate cut still ‘on the table’

Banks’ nonperforming loan ratio up in January

PHILIPPINE BANKS’ asset quality worsened as the industry’s gross nonperforming loan (NPL) ratio rose in January, according to data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

Preliminary data from the central bank showed the bad loan ratio rose to 3.38% in January from 3.27% in December. This was the highest in two months or since the 3.54% in November.

However, this was lower than 3.44% in the same month in 2024.

Data from the central bank showed the amount of soured loans went up by 2.5% to P512.83 billion in January from P500.43 billion a month earlier.

Year on year, bad loans rose by 11.3% from P460.76 billion.

Loans are considered nonperforming once they remain unpaid for at least 90 days after the due date. These are deemed as risk assets since borrowers are unlikely to pay.

The total loan portfolio of the banking system stood at P15.18 trillion as of end-January, down by 1% from P15.32 trillion at end-December. Year on year, it jumped by 13.4% from P13.38 trillion a year ago.

Past due loans increased by 4.6% month on month to P633.07 billion from P605.22 billion. It likewise climbed by 10.8% from P571.56 billion a year earlier.

This brought the past due ratio to 4.17%, higher than 3.95% in December but lower than 4.27% a year ago.

Meanwhile, restructured loans inched up by 0.3% to P311.22 billion in January from P310.44 billion in December. It rose by 3.1% from P302 billion in January 2024.

Restructured loans accounted for 2.05% of the industry’s total loan portfolio, a tad above the 2.03% in the month prior but lower than 2.26% in January 2024.

Banks’ loan loss reserves amounted to P488.48 billion, up by 1.6% from P480.64 billion in December and by 5.7% from P462.12 billion a year ago.

This brought the January loan loss reserve ratio to 3.22% from

3.14% in December and 3.45% in the same month in 2024.

Lenders’ NPL coverage ratio, which gauges the allowance for potential losses due to bad loans, slipped to 95.25% in January from 96.04% in December and 100.29% in 2023.

Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said the uptick in the NPL ratio reflects the continued growth in bank loans.

Latest data from the BSP showed bank lending jumped by 12.8% to P13.02 trillion in January, its fastest pace in over two years.

“The higher NPL in January may be reflective of higher loan demand during the holiday season up until the start of 2025 but I don’t think this is a cause for concern on liquidity,” Reinielle Matt M. Erece, economist at Oikonomia Advisory and Research, Inc., said.

“Slow economic growth that we saw in the last quarter may also be a cause of struggle in the repayment of these loans due to slow earnings growth,” he added.

The central bank’s rate-cutting cycle in the latter half of the year also bolstered demand for loans, Mr. Ricafort said.

The BSP began its easing cycle in August last year and slashed borrowing costs for three straight meetings, reducing the key rate by a total of 75 basis points (bps) by end-2024.

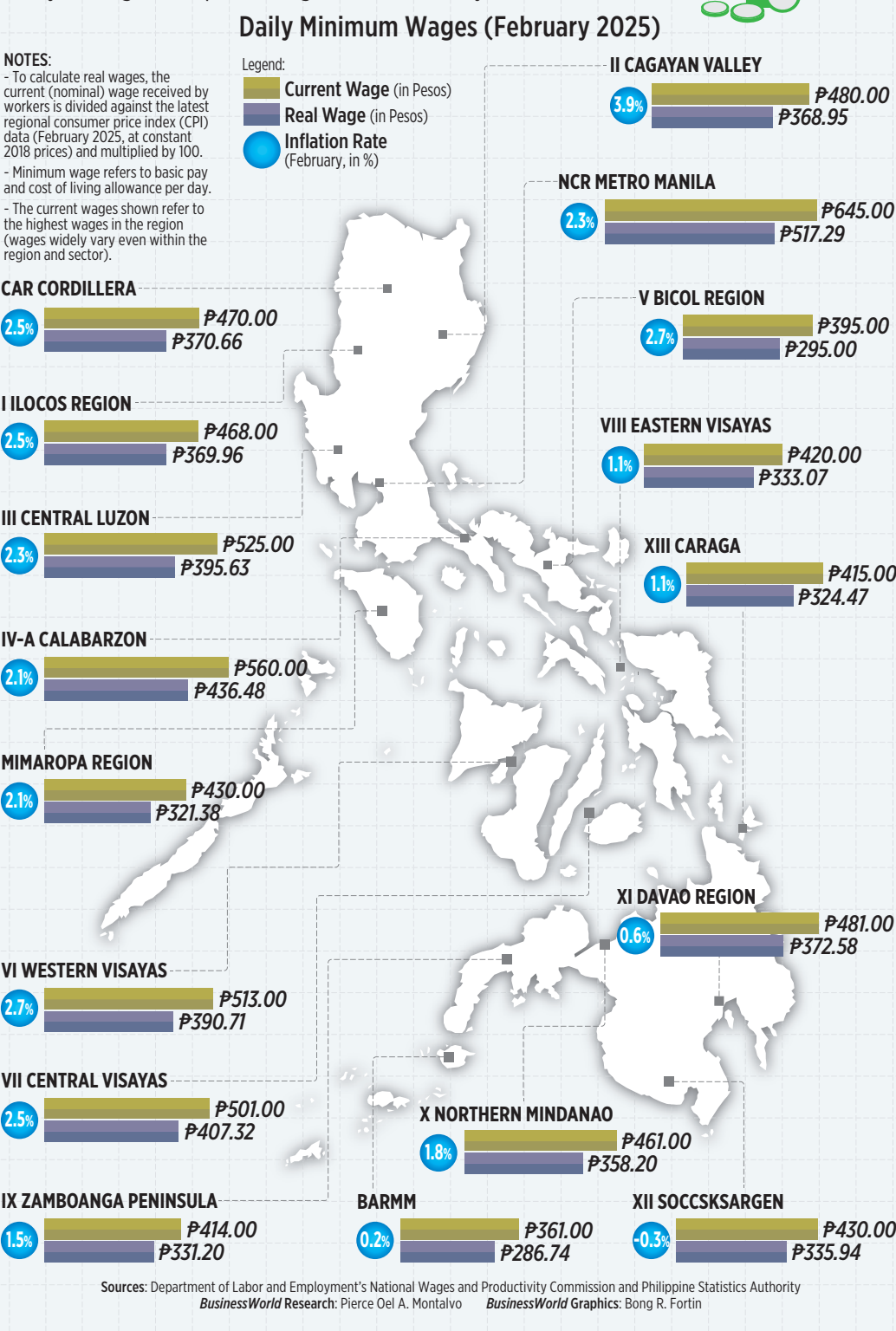
“The slight monthly pickup on NPL ratio may have to do with the seasonal slowdown in sales, earnings, and other business activities upon crossing the new year from the Christmas holiday season that is considered one of highest in sales for many businesses,” he added.

For the coming months, Mr. Ricafort said the recent cut in banks’ reserve requirement ratio (RRR) could infuse liquidity into the financial system and boost banks’ loans and investments.

Loan ratio, SI/5

HOW MINIMUM WAGES COMPARED ACROSS REGIONS IN FEBRUARY

In February, inflation-adjusted wages were 18.7% to 25.3% lower than the current daily minimum wages across the regions in the country. Meanwhile, in peso terms, real wages were lower by around P74.26 to P129.37 from the current daily minimum wages set by the Regional Tripartite Wages and Productivity Board.



By Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson Reporter

THE Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) could resume its easing cycle as early as its next meeting on April 10, its top official said.

BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr. said a rate cut is still “on the table” at the Monetary Board’s meeting next month, signaling “a few more” rate cuts for the rest of the year.

“Let me say that we see ourselves still on the easing cycle. We are expecting to cut a few more times this year. But how much, we haven’t determined,” he said at a forum.

Mr. Remolona also confirmed that the Monetary Board’s next meeting would be moved to April 10 from April 3.

“When we think we’re on track, more or less on track, we stay with baby steps, which means 25 basis points (bps) at a time,” he said.

The central bank unexpectedly kept rates steady at its February policy review, opting to keep the benchmark at 5.75%.

This after it delivered three straight 25-bp cuts at each of its meetings in August, October and December.

“If things look much worse than we thought — that’s what we call a hard landing — it can be up to 50 bps of a cut, even more, but as long as we’re more or less on track, it will be 25 bps at a time,” Mr. Remolona said.

However, a hard landing or a recession scenario is “highly unlikely,” he added.

The Philippine economy grew by a slower-than-expected 5.2% in the fourth quarter, bringing 2024 growth to 5.6%. The full-year growth was well below the 6-6.5% target.

This year, the government is targeting 6-8% growth.

Mr. Remolona said the central bank considers several scenarios in its policy decisions.

“There’s the baseline scenario, which is kind of saying we’ll cut by this many times the rest of the year. Then we have a hawkish scenario, which means fewer cuts. And then there’s the dovish scenario, which means more cuts than the baseline,” he said.

Rate cut, SI/5



PHILIPPINE STAR/RYAN BALDEMOR

LINEMEN are at work along a street in Ermita, Manila.

Meralco hikes rates for households this March

TYPICAL HOUSEHOLDS in areas served by Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) can expect higher electricity bills this month as the power distributor is set to hike rates by P0.2639 per kilowatt-hour (kWh) due to higher transmission charge and feed-in tariff allowance (FIT-All).

The upward adjustment pushed the overall rate to P12.2901 per kWh in March from P12.0262 per kWh in February, the company said in a statement on Tuesday.

Households consuming 200 kWh will see their monthly electricity bills go up by around P53. Those consuming 300 kWh, 400 kWh, and 500 kWh will have to pay an additional P79, P106, and P132, respectively.

Meralco attributed the rate increase to the conclusion of the

one-time refund on regulatory reset fee, equivalent to P0.2264 per kWh for its customers. The refund was implemented last month as ordered by the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC).

Also contributing to higher rates was the P0.1294 per kWh increase in transmission charge due to higher ancillary service charges incurred by the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines. The transmission charge for March also covered the second of three monthly collections for the recovery of costs of reserve market suppliers.

The ERC directed the recovery of the remaining 70% of the reserve market settlement fees incurred in March last year. This will be reflected in customers’ bills until April.

Adding to the upward adjustment was the implementation of

the new FIT-All rate of P0.1189 per kWh, which was higher than the previous rate of P0.0838 per kWh.

The FIT-All is a uniform charge billed to all on-grid electricity consumers to support the development and promotion of renewable energy.

Other charges, which included taxes, increased by P0.0416 per kWh.

“Such increases were mitigated by the lower generation charge for February supply month that impacted the March billings of Meralco customers. The reduction is almost 17 centavos per kWh in generation charge,” Joe R. Zalardriaga, Meralco vice-president and head of corporate communications, said in Filipino during a briefing.

The generation charge fell by P0.1686 per kWh to P7.0517 from

P7.2203 per kWh last month due to lower costs from Meralco’s supply sources.

The peso appreciation against the US dollar pushed down the charges from independent power producers (IPP) and power supply agreements (PSA) to P1.0143 per kWh and P0.2934 per kWh, respectively. Around 98% of IPP costs and 61% of PSA costs were dollar-denominated.

The peso closed at P57.995 on Feb. 28, strengthening by 37 centavos from its P58.365 finish on Jan. 31.

Charges in the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM), the trading floor of electricity, decreased by P0.2247 per kWh due to the improved supply situation in Luzon.

Meralco, SI/5



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