P25 IN METRO MANILA, PHILIPPINES

BusinessWorld

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

STOCK MARKET

PSEi

OPEN:	6,537.47
HIGH:	6,537.47
LOW:	6,436.00
CLOSE:	6,466.86
VOL.:	1.540 B
VAL(P):	6.491 B

▼ 84.95 PTS. 1.29%

30 DAYS TO MAY 15, 2025

ASIAN MARKETS

MAY 15, 2025

	CLOSE		NET	%
Japan (Nikkei 225)	37,755.51	▼	-372.62	-0.98
Hong Kong (Hang Seng)	23,453.16	▼	-187.49	-0.79
Taiwan (Weighted)	21,730.25	▼	-52.62	-0.24
Thailand (SET Index)	1,193.39	▼	-23.32	-1.92
S.Korea (Kse Composite)	2,621.36	▼	-19.21	-0.73
Singapore (Straits Times)	3,881.73	▲	10.68	0.28
Sydney (All Ordinaries)	8,297.50	▲	17.90	0.22
Malaysia (Klse Composite)	1,573.02	▼	-10.49	-0.66

WORLD MARKETS

MAY 14, 2025

	CLOSE		NET
Dow Jones	42,051.060	▼	-89.370
NASDAQ	19,146.809	▲	136.724
S&P 500	5,892.580	▲	6.030
FTSE 100	8,585.010	▼	-17.910
Euro Stoxx50	4,495.560	▼	-14.580

PESO-DOLLAR RATES

FX

OPEN	P55.800
HIGH	P55.710
LOW	P55.840
CLOSE	P55.746
W.AVE.	P55.777
VOL.	$1,872.10 M

SOURCE : BAP

▲ 10.90 CTVS

30 DAYS TO MAY 15, 2025

ASIAN MONIES-US$ RATE

MAY 15, 2025

	LATEST BID (0900GMT)		PREVIOUS
Japan (yen)	145.790	▲	145.910
Hong Kong (HK dollar)	7.809	▼	7.799
Taiwan (NT dollar)	30.179	▲	30.183
Thailand (baht)	33.290	▼	33.190
S. Korea (won)	1,396.490	▼	1,391.550
Singapore (dollar)	1.297	▼	1.296
Indonesia (rupiah)	16,510	▲	16,545
Malaysia (ringgit)	4.285	—	4.285

WORLD CURRENCIES

MAY 15, 2025

	CLOSE		PREVIOUS
US$/UK pound	1.3287	▼	1.3351
US$/Euro	1.1206	▼	1.1257
US$/Aust dollar	0.6419	▼	0.6493
Canada dollar/US$	1.3983	▲	1.3905
Swiss Franc/US$	0.8372	▲	0.8333

DUBAI CRUDE OIL

FUTURES PRICE ON NEAREST MONTH OF DELIVERY

$66.01/BBL

▲ $0.76

30 DAYS TO MAY 14, 2025

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S1/1-12 • 2 SECTIONS, 16 PAGES

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE'S 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS BY VALUE TURNOVER • MAY 15, 2025 (PSEi snapshot on *S1/2*; article on *S2/2*)

		Value			
BDO	P161.300	P500,167,573	-P5.700	▼	-3.413%
ICT	P407.000	P449,412,014	-P4.000	▼	-0.973%
ALI	P22.900	P378,913,820	-P0.600	▼	-2.553%
URC	P91.950	P358,799,487	P0.000	—	0.000%
SMPH	P24.100	P319,135,805	-P1.100	▼	-4.365%
BLOOM	P4.020	P315,455,470	P0.020	▲	0.500%
BPI	P135.000	P272,545,572	-P4.800	▼	-3.433%
PLUS	P47.700	P236,540,370	P0.250	▲	0.527%
MBT	P78.000	P231,117,207	-P1.600	▼	-2.010%
JFC	P245.000	P217,116,552	P1.800	▲	0.740%

Remittance growth hits 9-month low

By Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson *Senior Reporter*

MONEY SENT HOME by migrant Filipinos rose 2.6% in March from a year earlier, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said on Thursday, though this was the slowest growth in nine months.

Cash remittances from overseas Filipino workers (OFW) coursed through banks hit $2.81 billion (P156.8 billion) from $2.74 billion a year ago.

Remittances from land-based workers increased 3.1% to $2.22 billion, while money sent home by sea-based workers inched up 1% to $595 million.

In the first quarter, cash remittances rose 2.7% to $8.44 billion from a year earlier. Money sent home by land-based workers jumped by 3.2% to $6.74 billion, while sea-based workers' remittances went up 1% to $1.7 billion.

"The growth in cash remittances from the United States, Singapore, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was the main driver of the overall increase in remittances for January to March," the BSP said.

The US was the top remittance source in the first quarter, accounting for 40.7% of the total. It was followed by Singapore (7.6%), Saudi Arabia (6.2%), Japan (4.9%), the UAE (4.6%), UK (4.4%), Canada (3.1%), Qatar (2.8%), Taiwan (2.8%) and Hong Kong (2.7%).

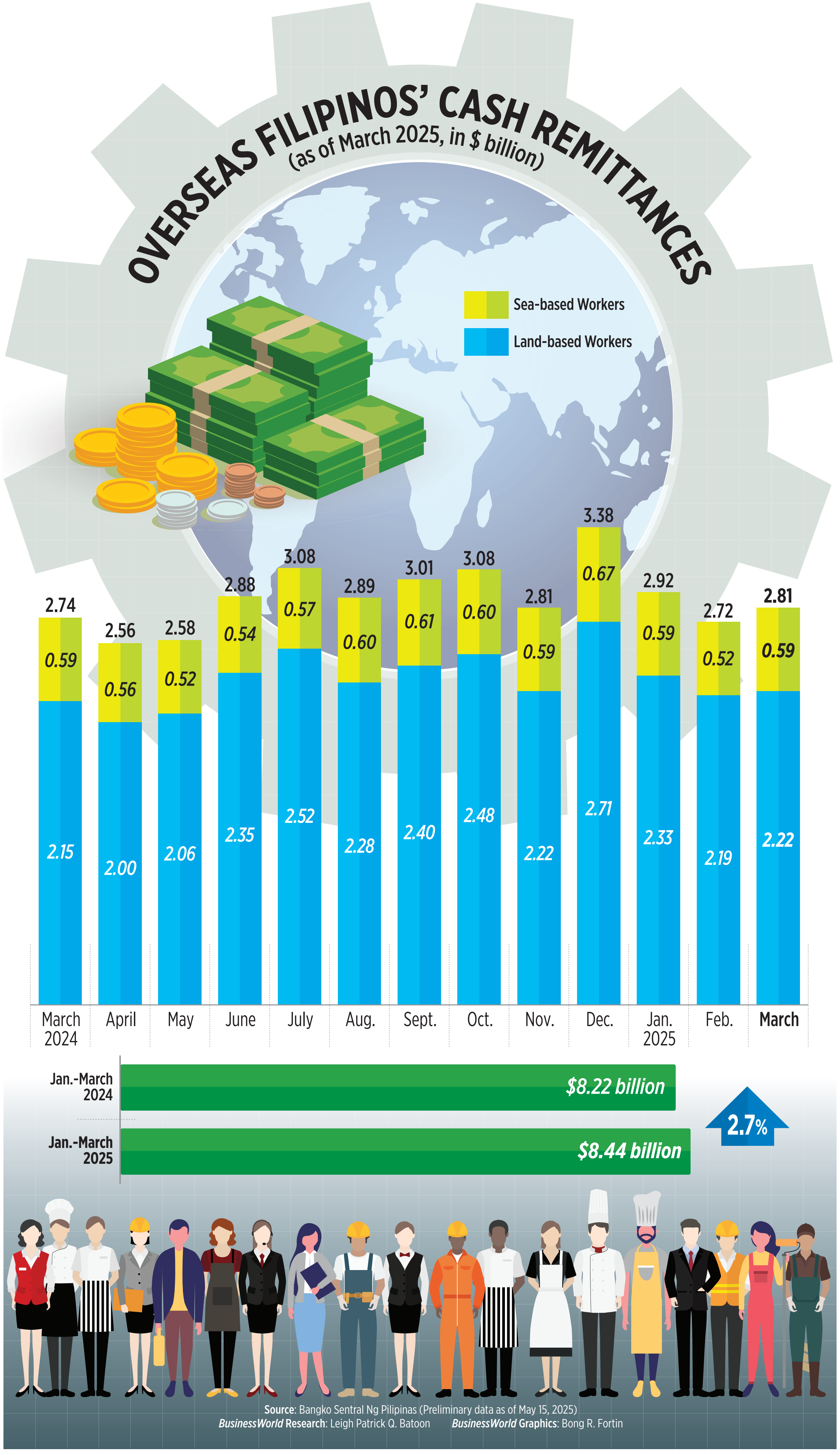
"Cash remittances rose in March and the first quarter largely due to sustained demand for Filipino labor abroad, particularly in healthcare, engineering and domestic services," John Paolo R. Rivera, a senior research fellow at the Philippine Institute for Development Studies, said in a Viber message.

He also cited seasonal factors such as the Lenten break and school-related expenses, which might have driven remittances during the quarter.

Michael L. Ricafort, chief economist at Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., said the continued single-digit growth in remittances is a "bright spot for the overall economy, as an important growth driver, especially in terms of consumer spending."

BSP data showed personal remittances, which include inflows in kind, increased 2.6% to $3.13 billion in March from a year ago.

Remittance, S1/9



Approved foreign investments lowest in more than a year

By Pierce Oel A. Montalvo *Researcher*

APPROVED foreign investments in the Philippines slumped further by 82% in the first quarter to the lowest in one-and-a-half years, according to the local statistics agency, as US President Donald J. Trump tries to undo decades of global economic integration through his sweeping tariff increases.

Foreign investment commitments approved by the country's investment promotion agencies plunged to P27.99 billion from P155.26 billion a year earlier, according to data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) posted on its website on Thursday.

This was also 51.5% lower than a quarter earlier and the lowest since the P27.46 billion logged in the third quarter of 2023.

"The main reasons are the geopolitical uncertainties and trade disruptions caused by Trump's tariffs," Calixto V. Chikiamco, president at Manila-based Foundation for Economic Freedom, said in a Viber message.

"These factors are aggravating the already dire unfavorable climate for foreign investments, from high food inflation to lack of infrastructure and internal political divisions," he added.

While Mr. Trump's announcement of sweeping reciprocal tariffs on US trade partners did not come until April, he had threatened to increase duties during his campaign last year.

He later suspended these tariffs for 90 days starting April 9, imposing a 10% base tariff instead until July, pending negotiations.

South Korea was the leading source of foreign investment pledges, with commitments hitting P12.36 billion or 44.2% of the total. The US followed with P3.08 billion (11%) and China with P2.88 billion (10.3%).

Real estate activities attracted the biggest share of foreign investments at P10.79 billion (38.5%), followed by manufacturing at P6.14 billion (21.9%) and administrative and support services at P5.35 billion (19.1%).

The impact of lower investment pledges on Philippine economic growth would be limited, Mr. Chikiamco said, noting how the economy continues to rely on consumption and government spending rather than investment.

Economic growth in the first quarter was slower than expected at 5.4%, below the government's 6-8% target for the year.

Investment, S1/9

Inflation seen within target until 2027

PHILIPPINE INFLATION is expected to remain within the central bank's 2-4% target until 2027, according to economists surveyed by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP).

The mean inflation forecasts are expected to settle at 3.1% this year, 3.3% in 2026 and 3.4% in 2027, the survey showed, based on the minutes of the Monetary Board meeting on April 10.

"The survey respondents see upside risks from the effect of geopolitical tensions, changes in global trade policies, adverse weather conditions and upward adjustments in utility rates, transport charges and minimum wages," the BSP said. "Downside risks are still seen from lower rice prices."

The central bank said it expects inflation below 3% until the fourth quarter, citing the steady decline in domestic food and global oil prices.

The BSP in its April policy review slashed its inflation forecasts to 2.3% for 2025 and to 3.3% for 2026. It now expects inflation to average 3.2% in 2027.

"However, inflation is expected to rise gradually and peak in the second quarter of 2026," it said.

As global commodity prices stabilize, inflation could ease to near 3% starting in the third quarter of 2026. "Initial baseline projections also indicate within-target inflation in 2027."

Inflation was the slowest in more than five years in April at 1.4%, bringing the four-month average to 2%.

Risks to the inflation outlook remain broadly balanced until 2027, which would let it continue taking a "measured approach" in further policy easing.

"Monetary policy settings still appear to be relatively tight," it said. "The timing and magnitude of further monetary easing will be determined on a meeting-by-meeting basis."

The Monetary Board resumed its easing cycle last month with a 25-basis-point (bp) rate cut to 5.5%. It has lowered borrowing costs by 100 bps since August last year.

BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr. earlier said they are open to cutting rates by 75 bps more this year amid a favorable inflation outlook.

Inflation, S1/9

Changing work styles fueling demand for coworking spaces

By Beatriz Marie D. Cruz *Reporter*

DEMAND for coworking workspaces in the Philippines is expected to rise amid easing inflation and as companies shift to flexible, short-term leasing, analysts said.

"The recent drop in inflation to 1.4%, coupled with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) guidance toward gradual interest rate cuts signals improving macroeconomic conditions, setting the tone for renewed business confidence and investment activity," Ruth Coyoca, assistant vice-president for sales and business development at Greatwork Global Workspaces, said in a Viber message.

"For the coworking industry, this shift presents a significant upside," she added.

The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated companies' shift to flexible workspaces amid changing work styles. These include coworking spaces, hot desk and virtual offices and hybrid workspaces.

Ms. Coyoca said further rate cuts by the Philippine central bank could encourage both big and small companies to take up more flexible workspaces.

"Lower interest rates enhance liquidity and reduce the cost of financing, encouraging startups, small and medium enterprises and large corporations alike to explore expansion strategies, including new project teams and satellite offices," she pointed out.

Inflation slowed to 1.4% in April, the lowest in over five years. BSP Governor Eli M. Remolona, Jr. earlier said they are open to cutting interest rates by 75 basis points more this year amid cooling prices.

To maximize the demand for coworking spaces, GreatWork is looking to strengthen its presence in central business districts such as Makati and Bonifacio Global City in Taguig.

It is also planning to expand in regional markets like Cebu, Davao and the greater Manila area amid the decentralization of the Philippine capital, Ms. Coyoca said.

"Our flexible lease terms, cost-efficient setups and prime locations allow companies to scale operations without the long-term financial commitments typical of traditional office spaces," she said.

"Many international firms, especially those exploring soft market entries or setting up satellite teams, are turning to coworking solutions as a low-risk, high-agility option," she added.

Weremote, a flexible workspace provider, said it has received inquiries from startups, business process outsourcing companies and corporate teams in need of satellite offices or swing spaces — temporary workspaces used by companies during periods of transition such as renovations, expansions or relocations.

"Flexible workspaces are no longer just a pandemic trend; they've become a reflection of how businesses now think about office use," Weremote Managing Director Rene D. Cuartero said in a LinkedIn message.

He said companies want the flexibility to grow, scale down or adjust their team size without committing to long-term leases.

Coworking spaces, S1/9