

Marcos expecting regional trade to offset threat to ‘rules-based’ order

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. said the Philippines will play a prominent role in regional trade and investment networks as ASEAN leaders called for measures to boost resilience in the face of uncertain global markets.

In his arrival statement in Manila after attending the 47th ASEAN Summit in Kuala Lumpur, Mr. Marcos said ASEAN is pushing to strengthen trade ties to uphold a “rules-based, open, inclusive, transparent, and non-discriminatory” economic order.

The bloc’s ongoing efforts on trade include revisions to the ASEAN Trade in Goods Agreement and greater utilization of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which are expected to provide “transparency, stability, and predictability” for investors, he said.

“At a time when the rules-based trading system faces significant challenges, these agreements will provide transparency, stability, and predictability — key foundations for building confidence among businesses and investors, and for sustaining ASEAN’s role as a driver of regional and global growth,” Mr. Marcos said.

He said the Philippines will continue to deepen partnerships with economies that share its commitment to peace and development, while asserting its sovereign rights in the South China Sea in accordance with international law.

At the summit, ASEAN leaders discussed efforts to “future-proof” ASEAN economies through sus-

tainable growth, with a focus on climate adaptation, education, green jobs, and digital transformation.

Mr. Marcos said discussions with the International Monetary Fund, Group of 20, and BRICS underscored ASEAN’s central role in global value chains.

On the sidelines, Mr. Marcos held bilateral meetings with leaders from Japan, the European Union, Canada, Vietnam, Australia and the United Nations, with talks centering on trade, maritime cooperation, and investment promotion.

He also welcomed Timor-Leste’s accession as ASEAN’s 11th member, saying the Philippines supports capacity-building efforts to integrate the new member into the bloc’s economic and political frameworks.

The President said the Philippines is preparing to assume the ASEAN chairmanship in 2026, during which it will focus on inclusive growth, sustainability, and regional connectivity.

“We look forward to carrying ASEAN forward as we navigate our future together,” he said.

ASEAN is the world’s fifth-largest economy, with a combined gross domestic product of around \$4 trillion in 2023 and a population exceeding 670 million.

The region’s strategic location, young workforce, and deepening integration through trade agreements such as the RCEP have positioned it as a critical hub for supply chains and emerging industries.

— **Chloe Mari A. Hufana**

Food safety measures receive over P4 billion in funding in 2025

FOOD safety programs were allocated more than P4 billion in funding in 2025, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said in a statement.

The allocations include P3.298 billion for inspection, border control, and other regulatory services, P1.197 billion for integrated laboratories, and P85.219 million for food testing support, it said.

The announcement was made in conjunction with Food Safety Awareness Week,

jointly organized by the DA and the Department of Health, which focused on deploying scientific measures to ensure food safety.

Undersecretary and Chief of Staff Alvin John F. Balagbag said at the opening ceremony that the DA Inspectorate and Enforcement Office has conducted 124 inspection and condemnation activities, confiscating unsafe and unregulated agri-fishery products valued at P1.18 billion.

In 2026, the DA is proposing a P4.37-billion budget for such programs to upgrade laboratories and the food-safety regulatory regime.

The DA also reactivated its Food Safety Focal Group to harmonize safety standards across agencies and is finalizing a memorandum of agreement with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for joint inspection of agricultural shipments to curb smuggling.

Unprogrammed allocations cap seen deterring GAA ‘insertions’

By Katherine K. Chan

THE LIMIT on unprogrammed appropriations (UAs) in the government’s proposed budget modernization bill holds the potential to deter budget “insertions,” the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) said.

Assistant Budget Secretary Romeo Matthew T. Balanquit said the DBM typically sends a draft spending plan to Congress with a certain amount of UAs that double or triple once Congress is through legislating it.

“*Bumabalik ‘yan sa amin* under the GAA (General Appropriations Act), *nadodoble o natitriples* (it comes back to us as a GAA bill with double or triple the original level),” Mr. Balanquit told reporters on the sidelines of an event on Monday.

“That’s something that we don’t have control over. But hopefully, under the law, *halimbawa ma-push ‘yung* Philippine budget code, *magkakaroon ng cap ‘yan* (for example if the Philippine budget code goes through, there will be a cap on that),” he added.

UA spending is considered contingent on the availability of funds, which will require the government to either exceed its revenue targets or borrow more.

The budget process has been plagued by last-minute insertions and amendments at the bicameral conference committee level, spurring calls to do away with UAs.

Budget Secretary Amenah F. Pangandaman and the Palace, on separate occasions, have defended UAs, saying that some allowance must be made for unforeseen spending needs.

Ms. Pangandaman has proposed a 5% ceiling on UAs in the National Expenditure Program (NEP), the document prepared by the DBM which Congress then converts into a budget bill.

GlobalSource Partners country analyst Diwa C. Guinigundo said any wiggle room on UAs “opens the floodgates for abuse.”

“This is the best time to get rid of UA — it has been misused all these years to finance corruption through congressional insertions,” he said via Viber. “DBM together with all line agencies and other instrumentalities of

government should sharpen their pencils in capturing key expenditure items already based on one, necessary and priority list and two, absorptive capacity.”

Mr. Guinigundo said the government should not fund programs that are not spelled out in the national budget.

“Even disaster and emergency situations should have been covered by risk management and scenario-building exercises of various agencies of government,” he said. “*Kunin sa* discretionary funds *ng* Malacañang if disaster funds are not enough (Take it from the discretionary funds of Malacañang if disaster funds are not enough).”

Finance Secretary Ralph G. Recto has called a 5% UA cap excessive and “maybe” 2% would be sufficient.

Mr. Balanquit said he prefers any UAs to be “the lower the better.”

In the 2026 NEP, unprogrammed appropriations have amounted to P243 billion so far, equivalent to about 3.6% of the P6.793-trillion proposed spending plan.

A cap of 5% would imply a UA level of around P340 billion.

Mr. Balanquit said that the government’s current cash budgeting system still gives legislators room to modify the level of programmed funds for infrastructure projects, allowing for potential budget misuse.

“*Yung sinasabi naming* cash budgeting system is somehow just being implemented. *Pero... walang kapit* because in the end, *ginagalaw pa rin ng* Congress (The cash budgeting system we’re referring to is somehow just being implemented. However... it has not taken hold because, in the end, Congress will manipulate it),” Mr. Balanquit said.

The proposed Progressive Budgeting for Better and Modernized Governance Bill has been included in the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council’s 44 priority bills for the 20th Congress.

The measure seeks to introduce reforms to the budget and public financial management process by institutionalizing the Cash Budgeting System, the Treasury Single Account and the Integrated Financial Management Information System.

OPINION

ERM: Build on risk, or build to last

Every business leader today is navigating a world that feels increasingly unpredictable. From natural disasters and cyber threats to shifting regulations and reputational risk, the challenges are no longer isolated; they’re interconnected, fast-moving, and often overwhelming. What used to be considered “black swan” events, rare and unpredictable, are now recurring realities. Typhoons, data breaches, regulatory shifts, and public scrutiny are part of the daily backdrop for Philippine enterprises.

This is the new normal, and in this climate, resilience isn’t built overnight. It’s built through foresight, preparedness, and a culture that embraces risk as part of growth. In this environment, resilience isn’t just a buzzword. It’s a survival strategy — and at the heart of that strategy is Enterprise Risk Management (ERM).

ERM is a structured, organization-wide approach to identifying, assessing, and managing risks that could affect strategic objectives. Unlike traditional risk management, which often operates in silos, ERM integrates risk thinking into decision-making across all functions, turning uncertainty into insight and resilience.

BEYOND THE BIGGER PICTURE

Imagine a forest. From above, it looks lush, green, and thriving. But walk through it, and you’ll notice the uneven terrain, hidden predators, fallen branches, and fragile ecosystems beneath the canopy. This is the difference between strategic oversight and operational reality.

Many boards and executives operate from the treetops, focused on growth, performance, and long-term vision. But without a clear view of what’s happening on the ground, they risk missing the subtle but significant threats that lie beneath: compliance gaps, reputational risk, operational bottlenecks, or emerging stakeholder concerns.

ERM acts like a drone flying through the forest, not just hovering above, but scanning across layers. It helps leaders connect what’s happening at the top with what’s unfolding below. It encourages scenario planning, stress testing, and cross-functional collaboration across organizational levels. It prompts leaders to ask:

- What are our blind spots?
- Where are we most vulnerable?
- How do we mitigate the risks identified?
- How do we protect ourselves from risking the future while pursuing growth?

In my experience, the most successful organizations are those that treat risks not

TAXWISE OR OTHERWISE GRACE ABATAYO

as a threat but as a strategic partner. They understand that resilience is built not just from vision, but from visibility.

WHAT ERM CAN AND CANNOT DO

Enterprise Risk Management empowers organizations to navigate uncertainty with clarity, structure, and confidence — but it isn’t a magic solution.

ERM helps leaders view risk holistically, rather than in isolated pockets. For example, when an energy company noticed rising customer complaints and online criticism about service reliability and rate adjustments, its ERM framework flagged these as emerging reputational risks. The company activated its response plan, coordinated across legal, communications, and customer service teams, and engaged stakeholders early before the issue escalated into a full-blown crisis. By treating reputational risk as a strategic concern, not just a PR issue, the company protected its brand and reinforced public trust.

ERM also enables organizations to prioritize what matters most. A retail company, for instance, identified supply chain disruptions as a growing risk ahead of the holiday season. Instead of waiting for delays to impact store shelves, the company used ERM to secure alternative suppliers, improve inventory visibility, and coordinate with logistics partners. This proactive approach minimizes revenue loss and maintains customer confidence.

By aligning risk appetite with strategy, ERM supports bold decisions with thoughtful safeguards. It strengthens governance by embedding accountability into daily decisions. And when organizations manage risk proactively, they build trust internally and externally by showing stakeholders that they address uncertainty rather than ignore it.

ERM is a framework — a compass, not a map. Its value lies in how deeply it’s embedded into the organization’s culture, how consistently it’s applied, and how seriously it’s championed by leadership. But ERM cannot eliminate risk. It won’t predict every crisis or prevent every failure. It doesn’t replace leadership judgment. During the pandemic, even the most robust ERM frameworks couldn’t foresee every disruption, but organizations with embedded ERM adapted faster and communicated more effectively.

When embraced with intention, ERM becomes more than a tool. It becomes a mindset, one that empowers teams to move forward with confidence, even when the path ahead is uncertain.

BUILDING A RISK-READY CULTURE

Culture is the invisible force that shapes how risk is perceived and managed. In many organizations, risk is still seen as a barrier to innovation or a burden to be delegated. ERM challenges that mindset.

By embedding risk thinking into everyday decisions from procurement and project planning to marketing and stakeholder engagement, organizations cultivate a proactive, transparent, and learning-oriented culture. This is especially important in the Philippine setting, where trust, relationships, and reputation play a central role in business success.

A risk-ready culture doesn’t eliminate uncertainty, but it equips people to navigate it with confidence.

A CALL TO ACTION

ERM is not a one-size-fits-all framework. It must be tailored to the organization’s context, maturity, and strategic goals. But what’s universal is the need to start.

Whether you’re a startup scaling fast or a legacy enterprise navigating complexity, the question is no longer “Should we invest in ERM?” but “Can we afford not to?”

If you’re in a position of influence whether in strategy, operations, finance, or governance, now is the time to ask:

- Is risk embedded in our decision-making?
- Do we have a clear view of our top risks and how they interconnect?
- Are we building a culture that sees risk as a source of strength?

ERM is not just a framework or set of documents — it’s a mindset and attitude. And resilience begins when leaders choose to lead and inspire their teams with risk in mind.

The views or opinions expressed in this article are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of Isla Lipana & Co. The content is for general information purposes only and should not be used as a substitute for specific advice.



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Career Opportunity in **ASIANA AIRLINES, INC.**

AIRCRAFT MAINTENANCE MANAGER

Job Description:

- Manage the day-to-day aircraft maintenance operations, FAA regulations, Quality Control and Safety Procedure at the airport, and systems analysis and evaluation.
- Coordinate with maintenance teams to prioritize tasks, manage workflow, and meet deadlines.
- Conduct regular inspections to ensure work is done correctly and efficiently.

Job Qualifications:

- At least 2 years of work experienced as an Aircraft Maintenance Manager.
- Strong management skills and the capacity to lead and motivate teams.
- Excellent communication and strong interpersonal skills.

Applications may be sent to:
DA JEONG JUNG
jasmine313@flyasiana.com

COMPANY / EMPLOYER	NAME OF FOREIGN NATIONAL INTENDING TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION
ASIANA AIRLINES, INC. 6F The Salcedo Towers 169 H.V. Dela Costa St., Bel-air Makati City. International Air Transportation of Passengers and Cargo and all other business related to air transportation Workplace Address of Assignment: 4 th Floor IPT Building, Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 1, Ninoy Aquino Ave., Pararaque City	CHOI, JEONG WAN Unit 3917 Red Oak Tower, Two Serendra, BGC, Taguig City Korean national One (1) Year

ASIANA AIRLINES, INC. hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing and qualified to perform the service and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an **Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate Manila.**

Career Opportunity in **POSCO E & C PHILIPPINE REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE**

REPRESENTATIVE OFFICER

Job Description:

- To promote the company services and develop business opportunities.
- To build and maintain relationship with prospective clients.
- To gather market intelligence and provide insight to support business decisions.
- Provide regular updates and reports to the Head Office.

Job Qualifications:

- Bachelor’s/College Graduate in any field.
- High level of interpersonal and communication skills
- Good attention to detail, accuracy, and time management.

Applications may be sent to:
Mary Grace Lacuesta
m.lacuesta@pvcpi.com

COMPANY / EMPLOYER	NAME OF FOREIGN NATIONAL INTENDING TO APPLY FOR THE POSITION
POSCO E & C PHILIPPINE REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE Unit 1508 High Street South Corporate Plaza Tower 2 11th Avenue Corner 26th Avenue Bonifacio Global City, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City Representative Office	KIM, HONGSOO Unit 15-B, 8 Forbestown Road Condo, Forbestown Road, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City, Metro Manila Korean national Two (2) Years

POSCO E & C PHILIPPINE REPRESENTATIVE OFFICE hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing and qualified to perform the service and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an **Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region located at 967 Maligaya Street, Malate Manila.**

Company Name: HSBC Electronic Data Processing (Philippines), Inc.
Address: Building C-1, UP Ayala Technohub, Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila
Nature of Business: Other Call Center Activities (Voice), N.E.C.

Contact details of the Company: Monna Angelica M. Basilio | monna.mariano.basilio@hsbc.com.ph

Job Position: VP – Cash and Liquidity Management

Job Description:

- Manage the Manila Cash & Liquidity Management and Overdraft team processes
- Providing support to the Cash Services Management team.
- Responsible for onshore stakeholder and Funding Manager
- Senior point of escalation and represent Cash & Liquidity Management in entity aligned change or regulatory program
- Develop a strong personal technical capability
- Lead and deliver global objectives aligned to global strategies
- Partner with Product Owner to develop Liquidity Management capabilities
- To support growing demand for real time monitoring and management of payment flow and liquidity optimisation
- Develop the management and leadership capacities within the service centre in Manila
- Focusing on succession planning to ensure we meet current and future operational requirement

Basic Qualifications for the Position:

- Strong intimate knowledge of HSBC’s various Global business’s and functions
- Working knowledge of the fundamentals of payments, cash management and liquidity risk
- Strong knowledge of the external environment – regulatory, political, competitors, innovation etc.
- Strong team leadership skills, particularly with regards to coaching and developing team members.
- High level of drive and motivation to ensure successful delivery of complex transformational initiatives
- Outstanding organizational and planning skills in order to cope with multiple large-scale responsibilities
- Proven ability in working across multi-disciplinary and multi-cultural, diverse work environments
- Strong analytical background. Track record of working with large and complex data sets.
- Successful experience in developing and retaining critical talent and building an effective leadership team
- Outstanding interpersonal and communication skills with a proven ability to communicate effectively and confidently at all levels

Monthly Salary Range: Php 150,000 – 500,000
Workplace Location: Quezon City

Name of Foreign National: Norhashikin Binti Hasan
City of Residence: Quezon City
Duration of Employment: 2 years

HSBC Electronic Data Processing (Philippines), Inc. hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an **Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment - National Capital Region located at 967 Wasmiya Building, Maligaya Street, Malate, Manila.**