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:	6,461.94
HIGH:	6,500.18
LOW:	6,425.07
CLOSE:	6,426.83
VOL.:	1.193 B
VAL(P):	9.125 B

▼ 184.41 PTS. 2.78%

30 DAYS TO MARCH 2, 2026

ASIAN MARKETS

MARCH 2, 2026

	CLOSE		NET	%
Japan (Nikkei 225)	58,057.24	▼	-793.03	-1.35
Hong Kong (Hang Seng)	26,059.85	▼	-570.69	-2.14
Taiwan (Weighted)	35,095.09	▼	-319.40	-0.90
Thailand (SET Index)	1,466.51	▼	-61.75	-4.04
S.Korea (Kse Composite)*	6,244.13	▼	-63.14	-1.00
Singapore (Straits Times)	4,890.86	▼	-104.21	-2.09
Sydney (All Ordinaries)	9,200.90	▲	2.30	0.03
Malaysia (Klse Composite)	1,700.21	▼	-16.40	-0.96

*CLOSING PRICE AS OF FEB. 27,2026

WORLD MARKETS

FEBRUARY 27, 2026

	CLOSE		NET
Dow Jones	48,977.920	▼	-521.280
NASDAQ	22,668.212	▼	-210.171
S&P 500	6,878.880	▼	-29.980
FTSE 100	10,910.550	▲	63.850
Euro Stoxx50	5,294.260	▲	7.030

PESO-DOLLAR RATES

FX

OPEN	P57.850
HIGH	P57.850
LOW	P58.200
CLOSE	P58.200
W.AVE.	P58.093
VOL.	$2,244.50 M

▼ 53.50 CTVS

30 DAYS TO MARCH 2, 2026

SOURCE : BAP

ASIAN MONIES-US$ RATE

MARCH 2, 2026

	LATEST BID (0900GMT)		PREVIOUS
Japan (yen)	156.8400	▼	156.0500
Hong Kong (HK dollar)	7.8224	▲	7.8225
Taiwan (NT dollar)	31.5320	▼	31.3750
Thailand (baht)	31.4200	▼	31.0000
S. Korea (won)	1,456.2100	▼	1,439.2000
Singapore (dollar)	1.2705	▼	1.2645
Indonesia (rupiah)	16,855.000	▼	16,760.000
Malaysia (ringgit)	3.9250	▼	3.8880

WORLD CURRENCIES

MARCH 2, 2026

	CLOSE		PREVIOUS
US$/UK pound	1.3376	▼	1.3484
US$/Euro	1.1739	▼	1.1813
US$/Aust dollar	0.7081	▼	0.7113
Canada dollar/US$	1.3647	▲	1.3642
Swiss Franc/US$	0.7711	▲	0.7687

DUBAI CRUDE OIL

FUTURES PRICE ON NEAREST MONTH OF DELIVERY

$71.23/BBL

▲ $0.69

30 DAYS TO FEBRUARY 27, 2026

VOL. XXXIX • ISSUE 154

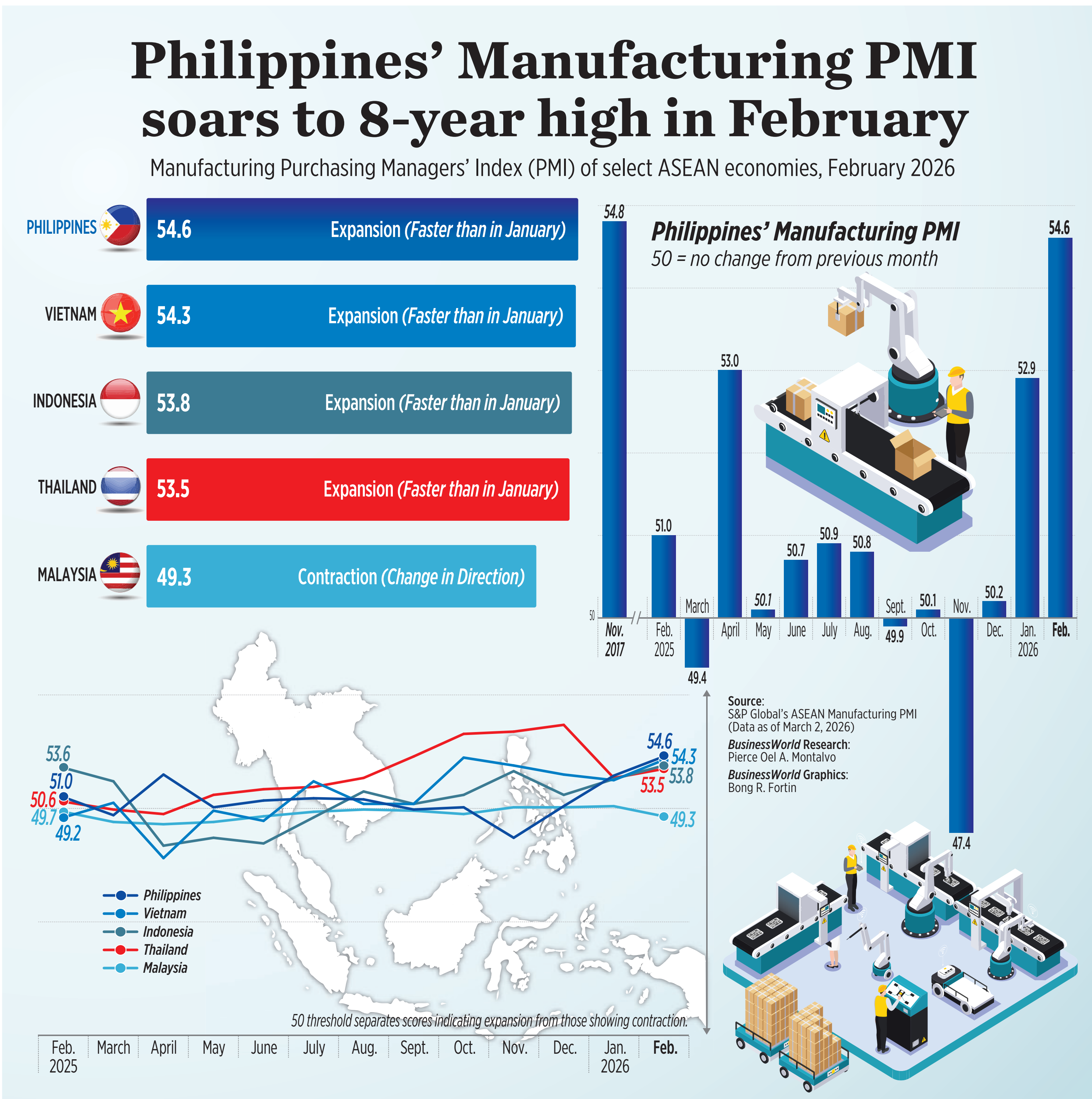
TUESDAY • MARCH 3, 2026 • www.bworldonline.com

S1/1-12 • 2 SECTIONS, 16 PAGES

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE'S 10 MOST ACTIVE STOCKS BY VALUE TURNOVER • MARCH 2, 2026 (PSEi snapshot on *S1/2*; article on *S2/2*)

		Value			
ICT	P680.000	P2,101,516,420	-P38.000	▼	-5.292%
BDO	P134.100	P420,631,354	-P3.200	▼	-2.331%
PLUS	P16.700	P370,646,040	P0.600	▲	3.727%
JFC	P205.200	P339,222,782	-P8.800	▼	-4.112%
AC	P563.000	P292,615,735	-P37.000	▼	-6.167%
BPI	P115.000	P265,741,321	-P1.000	▼	-0.862%
ALI	P21.000	P257,070,905	P0.100	▲	0.478%
MBT	P75.500	P221,860,065	-P1.500	▼	-1.948%
SMPH	P21.150	P195,083,380	-P0.350	▼	-1.628%
SM	P696.500	P187,447,480	-P8.500	▼	-1.206%

Factory activity surges in February



By Justine Irish D. Tabile
Senior Reporter

PHILIPPINE FACTORY activity in February expanded at its fastest pace in eight years amid an increase in production and new orders as well as a "surge in business confidence," S&P Global said on Monday.

However, the US-Iran conflict may cause a spike in oil prices, which may pose a risk to the manufacturing sector in the coming months, S&P added.

S&P Global Philippines Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 54.6 in February from 52.9 in January, the strongest improvement since November 2017 when PMI stood at 54.8.

A PMI reading above 50 denotes better operating conditions than in the preceding month, while a reading below 50 shows deterioration.

"The Philippines manufacturing sector has had a solid start to 2026, with February marking its strongest performance since late 2017," Maryam Baluch, an economist at S&P Global Market Intelligence, said in the report.

"A sharp influx of new orders underpinned robust growth of output, and in both cases, the expansions were historically pronounced and reached multi-year highs," she added.

The Philippines recorded the fastest expansion in manufacturing activity in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region in February.

Based on available data from S&P as of Monday, the Philippines was ahead of Vietnam (54.3), Indonesia (53.8) and Thailand (53.5). Malaysia saw a deterioration in PMI to 49.3.

"The (Philippine manufacturing) sector's positive performance was accompanied by a surge in business confidence. Firms were hopeful that demand conditions would continue to improve and drive further expansions in production volumes," Ms. Baluch said.

Full ASEAN PMI data, as well as Myanmar's PMI, are expected to come out on Tuesday.

S&P Global said February marked the third straight month where operating conditions have improved in the Philippines.

It noted Philippine manufacturers posted faster rise in production volumes and new orders in February.

"The sharp expansions across these two measures were accompanied by an uplift in business confidence, which rebounded notably from the recent low recorded in the month prior," it added.

Output had increased for a second straight month, and at the fastest pace since November 2018.

S&P Global said there was a strong rise in order book volumes in the Philippine manufacturing sector in February.

"The respective seasonally adjusted index hit the highest level in just over eight years. The acquisition of new clients and bulk buying activity among customers was said to have pushed up new sales," it said.

S&P attributed the growth in new factory orders to improvements in domestic and international demand, amid a modest rise in new export orders.

"Foreign sales increased for the second consecutive month, though the pace of expansion held steady in February," it added.

JOB GROWTH SUSTAINED

Meanwhile, S&P Global saw a modest growth in employment last month, which it said reflects a rise in backlogs of work following a drop in January, as the increase in new orders put pressure on Filipino manufacturers' capacity.

"Employment growth across the Philippines' manufacturing sector was sustained in February, with staffing numbers rising for a second straight month," it said.

"The pace of job creation was only modest overall and therefore insufficient to prevent a fresh buildup in backlogs of work," it added.

Ms. Baluch said that jobs growth will further increase in the coming months as manufacturers scope to increase their staffing numbers amid rising backlogs.

Philippine manufacturers also recorded an accelerated input buying rate in February, which was the strongest pace in expansion since January 2025.

However, S&P Global said that there have been more delays in February due to increased buying activity, bad weather, and port congestion.

"Average delivery times for inputs lengthened for a third successive month. The incidence of delay was sharp overall and the most pronounced in 14 months," it added.

Meanwhile, manufacturers reported falling operating expenses in February, which in turn allowed them to reduce their own charges.

S&P Global also noted manufacturers' outlook for the next 12 months improved in February.

Factory, S1/10

Oil prices go up but bigger hikes likely next week

By Sheldeen Joy Talavera
Reporter

OIL PRICES are set to further rise next week amid supply disruptions due to the escalating conflict in the Middle East, Energy Secretary Sharon S. Garin said.

This comes as fuel retailers announced pump price hikes of over P1 per liter, which were scheduled to take effect on Tuesday.

Ms. Garin said fuel prices are really expected to spike due to the US-Iran conflict.

"Prices will really go up. I will not sugarcoat that. Even if you say that oil imports are arriving, prices will still rise because of that tension. The stress in the market will push the price higher until it stabilizes. So, we need to expect that," she said in a radio interview on DZMM on Monday morning.

Seaoil Philippines, Inc., Shell Pilipinas Corp., Petron Corp., Chevron Philippines, Inc. (Caltex), Jetti Petroleum, Inc., and PTT Philippines Corp. announced an increase in gasoline prices by P1.90 per liter, diesel by P1.20 per liter, and kerosene by P1.50 per liter, effective March 3.

PetroGazz Ventures Philippines Corp. and Cleanfuel will implement the same adjustments, except for kerosene, which they do not offer.

The upward adjustments marked the 10th consecutive week of increase for diesel and kerosene, and eight straight weeks for gasoline. Since January, per-liter prices of gasoline, diesel, and kerosene rose by P6.70, P9.40, and P7.70, respectively.

Ms. Garin said the government is monitoring the situation as supply is crucial for the Philippines since it has no domestic production.

If the war lasts for a month, she said that pump prices may spike, and the country has to ensure there is enough supply by exploring other options.

The Philippines is a net importer of oil, making it vulnerable to swings in global oil prices.

Oil prices, S1/10

FUEL PRICE TRACKER
(week-on-week change)

GASOLINE		
Feb. 17	▲	P1.20
Feb. 24	▲	P0.60
Mar. 3	▲	P1.90
DIESEL		
Feb. 17	▲	P0.60
Feb. 24	▲	P1.20
Mar. 3	▲	P1.20
KEROSENE		
Feb. 17	▲	P0.60
Feb. 24	▲	P1.20
Mar. 3	▲	P1.50

- *March 3, 12:01 a.m.* — Caltex Philippines
- *March 3, 6 a.m.* — Petron Corp.; Phoenix Petroleum; Shell Pilipinas Corp.; PTT Philippines Corp.; Seaoil Philippines, Inc.
- *March 3, 8:01 a.m.* — Cleanfuel (Shaw Autogas, Inc.)

PHL central bank may pause easing amid inflation risks from oil shock

By Katherine K. Chan
Reporter

FURTHER MONETARY POLICY easing may be delayed as inflation could heat up again as oil prices surge amid a widening conflict in the Middle East, analysts said.

Marco Antonio C. Agonia, an economist at the University of Asia and the Pacific, said the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) may opt to stand pat before easing further to anchor its inflation expectations, considering the latest oil shock is a supply-driven issue.

"The higher inflation scenario due to these spikes could delay the BSP's easing path, depending on the severity of the conflict," Mr. Agonia told *BusinessWorld* in an e-mail.

"Being a supply-driven episode, the BSP cannot directly address this type of inflation through rate hikes," he added. "Instead, the BSP may delay its rate cuts to anchor inflation expectations and prevent second-round inflation drivers from springing up."

Reuters reported that oil prices surged on Monday as military conflict in the Middle East looked set to last weeks, threatening to upend a global economic recovery and perhaps reignite inflation.

Military strikes by the United States and Israel on Iran showed no sign of lessening, while Iran responded with missile barrages across the region, risking dragging its neighbors into the conflict.

All eyes were on the Strait of Hormuz where around a fifth of the world's seaborne oil trade flows and 20% of its liquefied natural gas. While the vital waterway has not yet been blocked, marine tracking sites showed tankers piling up on either side of the strait wary of attack or maybe unable to get insurance for the voyage.

In a report dated March 1, Nomura Global Markets Research said every 10% increase in global oil prices could add 0.5 percentage point (ppt) to Philippine inflation, the largest impact, on par with India, seen in the region.

"Still the pass-through to domestic retail fuel prices will be significant and quick, exerting substantial upward pressure on headline CPI (consumer price index) inflation," Nomura said.

"By our estimates, every 10% rise in oil prices could add about 0.5 ppt to CPI inflation, which suggests headline inflation could return to the upper end of BSP's 2-4% target this year, instead of averaging at 2.5% as our forecasts envisage."

The Philippines is a net importer of crude oil, making the country extremely vulnerable to global price swings.

Analysts already expect inflation to be on an uptrend this year, with costlier oil prices among the sources of inflationary pressures.

A *BusinessWorld* poll of 17 analysts yielded a median estimate of 2.4% for the February inflation print, faster than the 2% in January and the 2.1% seen a year ago.

If realized, this would be the fastest clip in 13 months or since the 2.9% in January 2025.

The BSP expects inflation to average 3.6% by yearend.

Inflation, S1/10