



Customs sees port cargo flow improving with consultations

THE Bureau of Customs (BoC) has proposed regular coordination meetings with port users and key government agencies to ensure improved cargo flow at the Manila ports.

In a Facebook post, the bureau said that it met with agencies and port users "to align strategies, strengthen coordination, and support seamless cargo flow at the Manila International Container Port and the Port of Manila."

"The objective of the meeting was to sustain efficient port operations through early coordination, shared planning, and practical data-driven solutions that support both government oversight and industry operations," the BoC said.

It added that the consultation process helps anticipate potential pressures and ensures that systems and processes remain responsive and effective.

During the meeting, the participants discussed how to strengthen planning and forecasting and streamline imple-

mentation of customs rules such as the dwell time rule and cargo release procedures.

"Commissioner Ariel F. Nepomuceno also proposed the conduct of regular coordination meetings among concerned agencies and industry representatives to continuously identify emerging issues and implement timely measures when necessary," it said.

"He underscored that efficient port operations are a shared responsibility that require close collaboration, transparency, and prompt action," it added.

Through these dialogues, the BoC aims to enhance yard management, streamline cargo release procedures, ensure the consistent application of policies, and reinforce contingency planning.

"The BoC remains committed to safeguarding trade facilitation, supporting economic growth, and delivering responsive and effective public service," it added. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

Metallic mineral output hits record P301 billion in 2025

METALLIC MINERAL production last year rose 18.2% to a record P301.32 billion, driven by a sharp increase in gold prices.

Citing preliminary data, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau said gold accounted for 54.33% of the value of metallic production despite a decline in volume.

Gold production slipped 8.8% year on year to 26,325 kilos. However, higher global prices lifted the total value of gold output by 29.6% to P163.7 billion.

Gold prices averaged \$3,442 per troy ounce in 2025, up 44.14% from a year earlier, according to the World Bank.

"The rally in recent months has been driven largely by investment demand, supported by a combination of geopolitical tensions,

macroeconomic concerns, and heightened policy uncertainty, reinforced by a weaker dollar and recent US monetary policy easing," the World Bank said in an October outlook report.

Silver production fell 17.5% last year to 44,599 kilos. However, higher prices drove the total value of silver output to P3.11 billion, up 7%.

Global silver prices averaged \$39.8 per troy ounce last year, up 40.64%, according to the World Bank.

"Silver prices have also risen to record levels, reflecting the metal's dual roles as a safe-haven asset and a key input in fast-growing renewable energy applications," the World Bank said.

Meanwhile, the nickel ore output rose 5.6% to 37.81 million dry metric tons (DMT). The value of nickel production grew 18.2% to P69.36 billion.

The World Bank said global nickel prices averaged \$15,162 per metric ton (MT) last year, 9.83% lower.

Copper concentrate production declined 9.7% to 231,885 DMT. Copper output in metal equivalent fell 13.3% to 46,084 MT.

Firmer copper prices helped cushion the impact on overall value. The total value of copper output slipped 2.2% to P26.63 billion.

The World Bank said global copper prices averaged \$9,947 per MT, 8.81% higher. — **Vonn Andrei E. Villamiel**

Iran crisis seen highlighting need for diversified trade, energy sources

THE ATTACKS on Iran by the US and Israel highlights the need to minimize the potential for trade disruption and widening the trade deficit by broadening the lineup of countries the Philippines trades with, analysts said.

"Any escalation that disrupts Middle East supply or raises risk premiums can push oil prices higher, increasing our import bill, widening the trade deficit, and adding inflation pressure," Philippine Institute for Development Studies Senior Research Fellow John Paolo R. Rivera said via Viber.

To mitigate the impact of the Iran crisis in particular, the Philippines must not be overly dependent on Middle Eastern supply subject to being choked off in a crisis, he said.

"This development underscores the importance of trade diversification and energy resilience, and maintaining macroeconomic buffers to absorb external shocks," Mr. Rivera said.

The trade-in-goods deficit narrowed 17.8% year on year to \$4.05 billion in January. It has been in deficit for over a decade, or since the \$64.95-million surplus posted in May 2015.

Foreign Buyers Association of the Philippines (FOBAP) President Robert M. Young said the group is factoring in delays and canceled shipments as a result of the Iran crisis.

"Some of FOBAP members' raw material suppliers come from the Middle East and Arab states, such as Turkey, India, and Pakistan," he said via telephone.

"We are expecting delays or cancellation of shipments due to the potential imposition of embargoes."

"Wars have devastating economic effects, such as the disruption of markets and an increase in risk and uncertainty," he said.

George N. Manzano, associate professor at the University of Asia and the Pacific, said the impact of the Iran crisis on the Philippines will be indirect.

"We don't trade much with Iran, relative to other countries," he said via Viber, but added heightened uncertainty in global trade could hurt the Philippines' flow of foreign investment and shipping movements, apart from the most immediate impact on oil prices, he said.

"Any escalation of the conflict can push global oil prices and

since the Philippines is a net oil importer, that may lead to higher inflation," he said via Viber.

Headline inflation picked up to 2% in January from 1.8% in December 2025.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas projects inflation to accelerate between 2.3% and 3.1% in February, caused by higher fish, rice, and fuel costs.

Mr. Rivera added that slower trade and growth globally could dampen domestic demand and raise production costs.

"If global growth softens, demand for Philippine exports, especially electronics and services, could moderate," he said.

The crisis could also weaken investor sentiment in the Philippines as companies turn cautious, Mr. Rivera added. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

When good intentions get misread

Why generational fluency matters

Since 2014, Acumen has led a multi-year generational study in the Philippines, mapping the shifting values, fears, and aspirations that drive behavior and decision-making. Project Alphabet is the latest in this series of studies conducted in 2025, with data and insights that can help companies better understand the evolving multi-generational Philippine consumer and workforce.

Generational Fluency is one of the key concepts laid out in Project Alphabet. Read on to get a glimpse of why it is a strategic skill for leaders, teams, and organizations in today's workspaces.

Have you ever said something in a meeting and suddenly felt the air shift, like you had triggered tension you never intended?

I have been there.

Once, I gave what I thought was simple feedback to a group of young analysts. Nothing dramatic, just notes for revision. But the reaction was intense. Another time, I suggested improving a process an older colleague had built years ago. The response was immediate defensiveness.

As we analyzed the data and interviews from Project Alphabet, our latest study on Filipino generations, I realized my own experiences were not isolated moments. We kept hearing the same stories, only told from different sides.

The younger colleague was not resistant to feedback. What hurt was feeling their effort was unseen.

The older colleague was not against change. What they resisted was the sense that their contribution no longer mattered.

That was the turning point.

Across generations, people actually want the same things at work. Respect, trust, growth, and the chance to contribute. But each generation interprets these differently based on the context they grew up in.

When those contexts collide without understanding, miscommunication turns into misunderstanding, and eventually mistrust.

Here is where **Generational Fluency** comes in. But what is it?

It is about empathy, language, and awareness to see beyond the labels and to harness the strengths of all four generations together.

As of 2024, Generation Y (born between 1981 to 1996) and Generation Z (1997 to 2012) make up 75% of the Philippine workforce. The older Gen X (1965-1980) and Baby Boomers have become a minority but they still hold majority of senior leadership roles.

It is this new mix that is driving much of the tension seen in the workplace today.

The evolving workforce composition demands that organizations pay close attention to its implications.



Companies are feeling the strain as long-established systems built on stability and uniformity are being challenged by growing demands for flexibility, transparency, and personalization. These demands are shaped by the different values and priorities that the younger generations bring into the workplace.

Generational Fluency is the ability to understand the perspective each generation brings and intentionally bridge those differences to unlock stronger collaboration and better outcomes.

What surprised us most in Project Alphabet was this: These misreads do not only affect workplace relationships. They influence how teams make decisions, how leaders manage change, and even how organizations understand their customers.

In highly competitive environments, teams that lack Generational Fluency often struggle to align internally, resulting in slower execution, weaker strategies, and messages that fail to connect externally.

Organizations that build this fluency see something different. Clearer communication,

stronger leadership alignment, and sharper understanding of evolving customer expectations.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR COMPANIES

We must emphasize that Generational Fluency is not simply a soft skill. It has structural implications.

For leaders, it is a capability that must be intentionally developed within teams. Many organizations are embedding generational fluency into leadership and commercial capability programs to strengthen execution and collaboration.

For organizations navigating changing customer expectations, it becomes a strategic advantage. Generational insight can sharpen value propositions and inform more meaningful customer experiences, especially as expectations evolve across generations of customers.

For family enterprises transitioning leadership across generations, it can mean the difference between continuity and conflict. We often see this emerge most strongly in family corporations navigating succession and professionalization journeys.

From the research, here are a few ways organizations can begin building generational fluency:

Listen for intent, not just words. Pause before reacting and ask, "What did they really mean?" Curiosity shifts conversations away from conflict and toward collaboration.

Respect the past, invite the future. Acknowledging what has worked creates psychological safety for innovation. Legacy and progress are not opposites. They are partners.

Clarity is crucial. Make assumptions, expectations, and decision rules explicit. What feels obvious to one generation is often invisible to another.

Organizations can move beyond misreads, recognize each generation's strengths, and build workplaces and businesses that work better because of their differences, not despite them.

If these challenges sound familiar, we invite you to explore more insights from Project Alphabet and how Generational Fluency can be applied within your organization.—**Andrea Tamayo-Oliveros**, Senior Strategist, Acumen (www.acumen.com.ph)