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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

PHL attracting more investments from ASEA neighbors — BoI

September 03, 2025 | Justine Irish D. Tabile | BusinessWorld

PHILIPPINE STAR/ MICHAEL VARCAS

INVESTMENT PLEDGES from Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries have reached P251.98 billion since 2020, reflecting the region's increasing confidence in the Philippines, the Board of Investments (BoI) said.

"As we build stronger trade and investment ties with our ASEAN neighbors, these numbers reflect the growing confidence of foreign investors in the Philippines as a place for business growth," Trade Secretary and BoI Chairperson Ma. Cristina A. Roque said in a statement on Tuesday.

"We will keep working to create a stable and welcoming business environment, one that brings in more investments and opens up real opportunities for Filipinos," she added.

According to the BoI, Singapore has been the biggest source of investment pledges since 2020, accounting for P245.97 billion of the total. The other top sources were Thailand with P4.34 billion, Malaysia with P1.65 billion, and Indonesia with P12.27 million.

In terms of industries, around P170 billion of these investments went to the information and communication sector, while P74.2 billion went to the power sector.

"The BoI-approved projects from ASEAN investors, particularly those in the information and communication and the renewable energy sectors, align with the Philippines' push for smart and sustainable manufacturing and services," said BoI Executive Director Evariste M. Cagatan.

The other top sectors were manufacturing (P5.58 billion), administrative and support services (P1.41 billion), and agriculture, forestry, and fishing (P930 million).

"Collectively, these projects are projected to generate 15,358 new jobs for Filipinos from 2020 up to July 2025," the BoI said.

Meanwhile, from January to July this year, total approved investment pledges from the ASEAN region reached P58.07 billion, according to the agency.

Citing a report from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the BoI said there is also a sustained growth in foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows from Southeast Asian countries.

In the first seven months, net FDI from ASEAN reached $95.78 million, with investments from Singapore accounting for $63.61 million and Malaysia accounting for $31.56 million.

Moving forward, the BoI said the country's participation in the ASEAN Investment Forum in Kuala Lumpur next month will help to further boost investments from the region.

The event is expected to showcase investment-ready projects under the ASEAN Regional Investment Promotion Action Plan 2025-2030 spanning biofuels, carbon capture and storage, medical devices, solar photovoltaic equipment, and regional supply linkages.

High production costs and labor shortages in their own countries are causing ASEAN economies to invest in the Philippines, Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. Chief Economist Michael L. Ricafort said in a Viber message. *[Cont. page 2]*

PHL attracting more investments from ASEA neighbors — BoI

[Cont. from page 1]

He said the Philippines' large and young population of over 114 million and leadership in the business process outsourcing sector also make it a viable market for ASEAN investors.

"The Philippines can also be an alternative, lower-cost destination for heavy industries such as shipbuilding, due to being cheaper and having a greater labor supply, such as engineers at a lower cost," he said.

"It is also the 10th largest market in terms of sales for some of the world's largest consumer goods companies, making it viable for production facilities, especially for perishable products."

Philippine Institute for Development Studies Senior Research Fellow John Paolo R. Rivera said the increasing investments from ASEAN countries reflect deepening regional integration and confidence in the Philippines as part of intra-ASEAN supply chains.

"The relocation of production capacities, regional hedging against global uncertainties, and proximity advantages are likely drivers," he said in a Viber message.

The US is imposing sweeping tariffs on goods coming from its major trading partners, including the Philippines and other ASEAN member states.

Mr. Rivera said ongoing infrastructure development in the Philippines under the "Build Better More" program has also enhanced the country's attractiveness to regional investors.

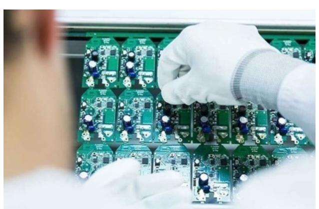
"Additionally, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership and ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area frameworks make it easier for ASEAN firms to view the Philippines as a strategic node for manufacturing, logistics, and services expansion," he said.

"However, these may be negated by hounding corruption issues."

Source: https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2025/09/03/695379/phl-attracting-more-investments-from-asean-neighbors-boi/

'Philippines among Southeast Asia's rising semiconductor hubs'

September 03 | Keisha Ta-Asan | The Philippine Star



In its latest sector review, Moody's said the Philippines, alongside Malaysia and Vietnam, is playing a bigger role in the global chip supply chain as multinational firms diversify operations amid United States-China trade tensions and calls to strengthen supply chain resilience.

STAR / File

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines is emerging as one of Southeast Asia's growing hubs for semiconductor assembly and testing, with the industry now accounting for about 32 percent of the country's total goods exports in 2024, according to Moody's Ratings.

In its latest sector review, Moody's said the Philippines, alongside Malaysia and Vietnam, is playing a bigger role in the global chip supply chain as multinational firms diversify operations amid United States-China trade tensions and calls to strengthen supply chain resilience.

While Southeast Asia is gaining ground in back-end processing – particularly assembly, testing and packaging – Moody's cautioned that economies like the Philippines face hurdles in moving up the value chain.

"Technical gaps constrain their ability to capture greater economic value," the report said, pointing to weaknesses in research and development, talent and infrastructure.

According to Moody's, Asia continues to dominate global semiconductor manufacturing, commanding more than 75 percent of overall chipmaking capacity, spanning advanced wafer fabrication, materials and assembly.

Despite US-led efforts to reshore production and the intensifying push for self-sufficiency in China, large-scale relocations of chipmaking out of Asia remain "commercially challenging" due to cost advantages and established ecosystems.

In the Philippines, semiconductors remain the backbone of electronics exports, supplying components used in consumer devices, automotive and industrial applications. *[Cont. page 3]*

'Philippines among Southeast Asia's rising semiconductor hubs'

[Cont. from page 2]

However, Moody's warned that chronic issues such as power supply reliability, logistics bottleneck and limited investment could weigh on the country's ability to attract higher-value operations in fabrication and design.

Still, the credit watcher said the region is on track to capture around 24 percent of global semiconductor back-end capacity by 2032, up from current levels. Malaysia leads the pack, but the Philippines and Vietnam are expected to expand their roles as cost-competitive alternatives for multinational players.

"Securing a competitive edge will hinge on workforce development, innovation and stronger public-private partnerships," Moody's said, adding that without such reforms, Southeast Asian economies risk remaining concentrated in low-margin, labor-intensive segments of the semiconductor chain.

Source: https://www.philstar.com/business/2025/09/03/2469958/philippines-among-southeast-asias-rising-semiconductor-hubs

PH to reclaim global ship building status with Hyundai shipyard revival — Marcos

September 03, 2025 | Jocelyn Reyes | Malaya Business Insight

President Marcos and Hyundai Heavy Industries executives lead the rites marking the revival of Subic's shipyard under HD Hyundai Heavy Industries. Photo courtesy of the Presidential Communications Office

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. vowed on Tuesday to restore the Philippines' standing in global shipbuilding as he led the revival of Subic's shipyard in Zambales under HD Hyundai Heavy Industries.

"For decades, even centuries, the Philippines has given the world our finest seafarers. It is only fitting that we also supply the world with excellent vessels to sail on," Marcos said at the inauguration of HD Hyundai Heavy Industries Philippines Inc. shipyard.

"Today, we begin reclaiming our rightful place among the world's great shipbuilding nations," he added, stressing that the revival of shipbuilding means a stronger industry, more livelihood for Filipinos and a better future for the country.

Marcos said combining domestic shipbuilding with the country's skilled seafaring workforce would make the Philippines a "complete maritime nation."

From 2014 to 2018, the country produced 1.2 to 2 million gross tons of ships annually—roughly 20 oil tankers or 30 large container ships.

That momentum waned in 2019, when output fell sharply. "Today, we raise the sails once more," Marcos said, citing Hyundai's investment that boosted Subic's capacity from 1.3 million to 2.5 million deadweight tons, doubling output from four or five massive oil tankers to as many as eight.

He said the expansion will employ 4,300 Filipinos by 2030, giving thousands of families steady income.

"Beyond size, the ships we now build can carry higher volumes, boost our exports, and create more jobs for Filipino workers," he added.

To meet the yard's manpower needs, Marcos said the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) has committed to train skilled Filipino workers.

TESDA established a Subic training hub with Hyundai in November 2024 and has since offered scholarships and programs in 16 maritime-related fields, including advanced welding courses, to ensure workers meet global shipbuilding standards.

Source: https://malaya.com.ph/business/business-news/ph-to-reclaim-global-ship-building-status-with-hyundai-shipyard-revival-marcos/

House panel reviewing VAT decrease proposal

September 03, 2025 | Jovee Marie N. de la Cruz | BusinessMirror

BusinessMirror
A broader look at today's business

THE House Committee on Ways and Means is now looking into the proposal seeking to cut the value-added tax (VAT) rate from 12 percent to 10 percent in a bid to ease inflationary pressures and give Filipino households much-needed relief.

Under House Bill 4302, or the proposed VAT Reduction Act of 2025, Batangas Rep. Leandro Leviste said the measure, if enacted, could reduce government VAT revenues by more than P200 billion annually but would translate to an estimated P7,000 in savings per household.

"This bill is about giving ordinary Filipinos a break. The VAT is regressive, hitting the poor and middle class the hardest. Lowering it makes our tax system more progressive," he said. *[Cont. page 4]*

House panel reviewing VAT decrease proposal

[Cont. from page 3]

In a briefing on Wednesday, House Committee on Ways and Means Chairman Marikina Rep. Romiro Quimbo welcomed the bill, saying the panel would give it serious consideration.

"What I commit to is that the committee will take a good, hard, and long look into any initiative that makes our tax system more progressive. Any measure that eases the tax burden is very welcome," Quimbo said.

Data from the Bureau of Internal Revenue and Bureau of Customs show VAT collections have ballooned nearly eightfold—from P156.67 billion in 2005, when the rate was raised to 12 percent under the Expanded VAT Law, to P1.20 trillion in 2024.

At 12 percent, the Philippines currently imposes the highest VAT rate in Southeast Asia. In comparison, Vietnam and Cambodia charge 10 percent, Indonesia 11 percent, Singapore 9 percent (GST), and Thailand 7 percent. Malaysia, Laos, and Myanmar impose between 5 and 7 percent.

The bill carries a safeguard provision allowing the president, upon the recommendation of the Department of Finance and the Development Budget Coordination Committee, to temporarily revert the rate to 12 percent if the government's fiscal deficit exceeds targets.

Economic analysts note that inflation has consistently ranked as the top concern among Filipinos in recent surveys. In July 2025, the Philippine Statistics Authority reported inflation at 4.1 percent, still above the central bank's target.

"Reducing VAT is a direct and efficient way to address inflation. It avoids leakages and cuts administrative costs associated with redistribution," Leviste explained.

Leviste argued that increased consumption and improved tax compliance could offset much of the shortfall.

Meanwhile, Finance Undersecretary Karlo Adriano cautioned that while VAT is regressive, it has built-in exemptions to soften its impact on low-income groups.

He explained that the government has placed exemptions on essential goods such as food and agricultural products to ensure that the VAT system does not become overly regressive and, ideally, remains progressive. However, he noted that if the VAT rate is reduced and replaced with revenue measures that neither burden the poor nor curtail public spending, the country's tax code would become even more progressive.

Source: https://businessmirror.com.ph/2025/09/03/house-panel-reviewing-vat-decrease-proposal/

DoF asks Congress to prioritize key tax reforms

September 04 , 2025 | Kenneth Christiane L. Basilio | BusinessWorld

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance (DoF) wants the 20th Congress to prioritize several tax measures to help support the government's fiscal consolidation effort, a Finance official said on Wednesday.

Workers clean and segregate assorted plastic bottles inside a junk shop in Tondo, Manila. The government is pushing for an excise tax on single-use plastics as a way to reduce the use of plastic. — PHILIPPINE STAR/RYAN BALDEMOR

STAR / File

The government is considering a domestic top-up tax for multinational companies in the Philippines and an excise tax on single-use plastics, alongside general tax and estate tax amnesties, Finance Undersecretary Karlo Fermin S. Adriano said.

These measures could help bolster efforts to cut down government debt and sustain economic growth via state spending amid global uncertainties, shifting trade relations and geopolitical conflicts, he added.

"Right now, our debt-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio is still around 61-62%, and we want to have a fiscal buffer if there will be a crisis," Mr. Adriano told lawmakers at a hearing at the House of Representatives. "We want to do fiscal consolidation at the moment, and at the same time we want to spend more at the moment given global uncertainties."

The government is hard-pressed to tap new revenue streams as mounting public debt adds strain to already limited fiscal space.

As of end June, the debt-to-GDP ratio rose to 63.1%, its highest level since 2005. The figure remains above the 60% threshold that multilateral lenders view as manageable for developing economies.

The DoF is pushing for an excise tax on single-use plastics as a way to reduce the use of plastic as the Philippines is among the top contributors of plastic pollution in waterbodies globally, said Mr. Adriano. *[Cont. page 5]*

DoF asks Congress to prioritize key tax reforms
[Cont. from page 4]

The proposal was one of the 28 priority bills identified by the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council in the 19th Congress. While it was approved by the House on third reading in 2022, the measure never made it out of the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

The DoF is looking at levying a P150-per-kilogram tax on single-use plastics with an annual 4% increase, Mr. Adriano said.

"Previously, it only covered single-use plastic bags, like semi-transparent plastics and sando bags. Now, we're considering to expand the coverage," he said.

Implementing an excise tax on single-use plastics could net the government an average of P11.59 billion in revenue annually over the first five years of implementation, said Mr. Adriano, with a portion of the collections being used to fund waste management programs.

GLOBAL MINIMUM TAX

The DoF official said they are also looking at pushing for a 15% domestic top-up tax for multinationals with a global revenue exceeding €750 million in two of the four preceding fiscal years.

The Philippines is a party to the Base Erosion and Profit Shifting program by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, a global initiative that seeks to crack down on tax avoidance by multinational companies. Signed by more than 100 nations, it included a proposal to introduce a 15% global minimum tax (GMT) rate.

Mr. Adriano said the absence of a GMT framework has cost the Philippines an estimated P162.9 billion in annual revenues since it was globally implemented in 2021.

"If we do not have a legislated domestic top-up tax here… we will not be able to collect it. But if another jurisdiction has that domestic top-up tax, they (multinationals) will pay it in another jurisdiction," he said.

Most multinationals operating in the Philippines are Japanese companies, followed by those from the US, UK, Germany and France, according to a DoF presentation to lawmakers.

The tax proposals are a "step in the right direction" but are ill-timed due to challenges in economic growth and inflation risks, said Jonathan L. Ravelas, a senior adviser at Reyes Tacandong & Co.

"The excise tax on single-use plastics and the domestic top-up tax align with global standards and can boost revenue while promoting sustainability. But effectiveness hinges on swift implementation and strong enforcement," he said in a Viber message.

TAX AMNESTY

The Finance department is also proposing a general tax amnesty for outstanding income, withholding, capital gains, and other percentage taxes, with rates set at 2% of a taxpayer's total assets as of December 2024 or 5% of total net worth, whichever is higher.

Lawmakers in the House and Senate are pushing for a general tax amnesty that will impose a 2% amnesty tax rate dependent on the total assets of taxpayers up to 2024.

Corporate rates would be based on subscribed capital, ranging from 5% or a fixed amount between P100,000 and P1 million under the tax amnesty proposal, DoF Director Euvimil Nina R. Asuncion said.

"There will be no Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR) examination of books for amnesty-covered years," she said at the same hearing, adding that those who will avail of the program would be immune from civil, criminal and administrative penalties.

Ms. Asuncion said taxpayers who avail themselves of the proposed general tax amnesty within the first three months of its implementation will receive a 20% discount. The discount would drop to 15% from the third to sixth month of implementation, and to 10% in the sixth and ninth month of implementation.

"Excluded from the general tax amnesty are those taxpayers with pending court cases related to those under the Presidential Commission on Good Government's jurisdiction, anti-graft and money laundering and tax evasion," Ms. Asuncion said. *[Cont. page 6]*

DoF asks Congress to prioritize key tax reforms

[Cont. from page 5]

The government is also keen on pushing an estate tax amnesty, after it expired in June, she added. “We want to extend this up to June 30, 2028.”

Ms. Asuncion said the estate tax amnesty would cover estates with unpaid taxes as of May 2024.

“The rate will remain at 6% and it will cover estates of descendants with the date of death on or before May 31, 2024,” she said.

The government collected P1.36 billion from 42,373 taxpayers under the estate tax amnesty in 2022, P1.89 billion from 51,400 taxpayers in 2023, and P2.66 billion from 56,901 taxpayers in 2024, a copy of BIR’s presentation to lawmakers obtained by *BusinessWorld* showed.

About P4.18 billion from 92,066 taxpayers were collected in the first seven months of 2025.

VAT CUT

Meanwhile, DoF’s Mr. Adriano said a House proposal to cut the value-added tax (VAT) rate to 10% from the current 12% could widen the budget deficit if enacted.

Batangas Rep. Leandro Antonio L. Leviste filed House Bill (HB) No. 4302 on Tuesday seeking to lower the VAT rate, arguing the current tax system is “regressive” and should be reduced to make taxation more progressive.

“That will have an impact. A big one,” Mr. Adriano told *BusinessWorld* in Filipino. “It could cost several billions, assuming there will be no new other [taxes] to offset losses.”

The BIR collected P467 billion in VAT during the first seven months of the year, nearing the government’s P473-billion full-year target, according to its presentation to lawmakers.

“The assumption is that VAT is regressive. But we’d like to point out that it can be progressive if exemptions are in place — which we already have,” Mr. Adriano said. “For example, food and agricultural products are exempt from VAT, and these account for about 40-50% of spending by the poorest households.”

HB No. 4302 also seeks to empower the government to return the VAT rate back to 12% for a year if the projected deficit is expected to exceed the programmed deficit.

Mr. Leviste, a former businessman, told reporters on Wednesday that he will push for a “wealth” tax to offset possible revenue losses.

“We want it to be a revenue-neutral bill, replacing a portion of the value-added tax with a more progressive wealth tax,” he said. “Instead of collecting… from the poor, we can collect those revenues from the wealthiest Filipinos.”

Mr. Leviste divested his stake in SP New Energy Corp. (SPNEC) before becoming a lawmaker. He sold around 16.44 billion SPNEC shares for P20.49 billion.

Source: https://www.bworldonline.com/top-stories/2025/09/04/695689/dof-asks-congress-to-prioritize-key-tax-reforms/

Marcos signs enhanced fiscal regime for mining industry act

September 04, 2025 | Luisa Cabato | Inquirer.net

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. signs into law the ‘Enhanced Fiscal Regime for the Mining Industry Act’ in a ceremony at Malacañang on Thursday, September 4, 2025. — Screengrab from Bongbong Marcos/Facebook

MANILA, Philippines — President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Thursday signed into law the “Enhanced Fiscal Regime for the Mining Industry Act,” establishing a fair, transparent, and accountable fiscal framework for large-scale metallic mining to ensure the government’s equitable share of revenues.

The law, to be officially known as Republic Act (RA) No. 12253, was signed by Marcos in a ceremony at Malacañang.

Among its features is the imposition of a 5-tier, margin-based royalty of 1 to 5 percent on income from metallic mining outside mineral reservations, with a minimum 0.1 percent royalty on gross output for mines below the margin threshold.

[Cont. page 7]

Marcos signs enhanced fiscal regime for mining industry act

[*Cont. from page 6*]

It also introduces a 5-tier, margin-based windfall profits tax of 1 to 10 percent on mining income and enforces a 2:1 debt-to-equity ratio or a thin capitalization rule, to limit tax-deductible related-party borrowing costs.

This measure is projected to generate P25.08 billion in revenues from 2026 to 2029, averaging P6.26 billion per year. /das

Source: https://business.inquirer.net/545111/signing-of-enhanced-fiscal-regime-for-the-mining-industry-act

[UPCOMING EVENT] ARANGKADA PHILIPPINES INVESTMENT FORUM 2025

Since 2012, the Arangkada Philippines Forum has been a premier platform for high-level dialogue on investment, economic reform, and inclusive growth in the Philippines. This year, the annual forum will take place on **September 25 and 26, 2025** at the **Marriott Grand Ballroom** in Pasay City and bring together hundreds of distinguished leaders from government, the private sector, academe, and media to discuss strategies to attract and retain investments and promote business growth. Specifically, the forum will be focused on the JFC's seven "big winner" sectors of agribusiness, infrastructure, manufacturing and logistics, tourism, critical minerals, creative industries, and Information Technology and Business Process Management.

The first day of the forum will feature speeches from top government and business leaders and breakout discussions focused on the seven sectors and the second day will feature exclusive business-to-business and business-to-government networking opportunities, live product and business demonstrations at booth exhibits, and in-depth industry talks that provide valuable insights into government services and investment-related topics.

For more information and sponsorships, you may visit this website links of Arangkada Philippines **Briefer**, **Sponsorship Tier** and **Confirmation Form**. You may also contact KCCP Secretariat at (632) 8885-73-42 or email info@kccp.ph for further inquires.

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