

Samsung launches M53 5G in PHL

SAMSUNG Philippines last week announced an addition to its mid-range Galaxy M Series phones available in the country, the M53 5G.

The company said the phone features improved technologies at an affordable price. The Galaxy M53 5G is available for P3,000 off for this month at just P26,990 from the original price of P29,990 on [samsung.com/ph](https://www.samsung.com/ph) and other online platforms. The available color options are blue, green and brown.

“The new device is the creative best choice as it balances style with functionality, allowing them to freely express themselves,” Samsung said.

“The new Galaxy M53 5G will help creative buffs capture, curate, and convey the moments that showcase who they are, right to the smallest details,” it added.

The M53 5G is powered by an octa-core processor and 8GB of RAM. It comes with 256GB of internal storage expandable up to 1TB via microSD card.

The phone comes with a 6.7-inch Infinity-O Super AMOLED Plus display and its bezel-less design offers a wider aspect ratio. Its screen has a refresh rate of 120 Hz for less blur and vivid details and contrast.

The M53 5G features a quad-camera rear setup with a 108MP main wide-angle lens, an 8MP ultra-wide camera, and 2MP macro and depth cameras. It also has a 32MP front camera.

The smartphone has a Mic mode feature to customize sounds for your needs. Voice Focus amplifies the caller's voice with enhanced noise cancellation, while All Sound adds ambient sounds.

It also has a 5,000mAh battery and supports fast charging.



Microsoft stops selling emotion-reading tech, limits face recognition

OAKLAND, CA — Microsoft Corp. on Tuesday said it would stop selling technology that guesses someone's emotion based on a facial image and would no longer provide unfettered access to facial recognition technology.

The actions reflect efforts by leading cloud providers to rein in sensitive technologies on their own as lawmakers in the United States and Europe continue to weigh comprehensive legal limits.

Since at least last year, Microsoft has been reviewing whether emotion recognition systems are rooted in science.

“These efforts raised important questions about privacy, the lack of consensus on a definition of ‘emotions,’ and the inability to generalize the linkage between facial expression and emotional state across use cases, regions, and demographics,” Sarah Bird, principal group product manager at Microsoft's Azure AI unit, said in a blog post.

Existing customers will have one year before losing access to artificial intelli-

gence tools that purport to infer emotion, gender, age, smile, facial hair, hair and makeup.

Alphabet, Inc.'s Google Cloud last year embarked on a similar evaluation, first reported by Reuters. Google blocked 13 planned emotions from its tool for reading emotion and placed under review four existing ones, such as joy and sorrow. It was weighing a new system that would describe movements such as frowning and smiling, without seeking to attach them to an emotion.

Google did not immediately respond to request for comment on Tuesday.

Microsoft also said customers now must obtain approval to use its facial recognition services, which can enable people to log into websites or open locked doors through a face scan.

The company called on clients to avoid situations that infringe on privacy or in which the technology might struggle, such as identifying minors, but did not explicitly ban those uses. — **Reuters**

Tech giants form metaverse standards body without Apple

META, MICROSOFT and other tech giants racing to build the emerging metaverse concept have formed a group to foster development of industry standards that would make the companies' nascent digital worlds compatible with each other.

Participants in the Metaverse Standards Forum include many of the biggest companies working in the space, from chip makers to gaming companies, as well as established standards-setting bodies like the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), the group said in an statement announcing its creation on Tuesday.

Conspicuously missing from the member list for now however is Apple, which analysts expect to become a dominant player in the metaverse race once it introduces a mixed reality headset this year or next.

Gaming companies Roblox and Nintendo also were not included among the forum's participants, nor were emerging crypto-based metaverse platforms like The Sandbox or Decentraland.

Apple has not yet publicly acknowledged plans for a headset, although it has reportedly given its board a sneak peek of the product, according to Bloomberg. It did not immediately

respond to a request for comment about the new metaverse forum.

Introducing such a device would put Apple in direct competition with Meta, which has staked its future on the growth of the metaverse and invested heavily in hardware to make its vision of interconnected virtual worlds a reality.

Meta, known as Facebook until it changed its name as part of its metaverse pivot last year, has disclosed plans for a mixed-reality headset code-named “Cambria” to be released this year.

Apple has been heavily involved in creating web standards such as HTML5 in the past. For three-dimensional content

in the metaverse, Apple worked with Pixar on the “USDZ” file format and with Adobe to ensure it supported the format.

Neil Trevett, an executive at chip maker Nvidia who is chairing the Metaverse Standards Forum, said in a statement to Reuters that any company is welcome to join the group, including participants from the crypto world.

The forum aims to facilitate communication between a variety of standards organizations and companies to bring about “real-world interoperability” in the metaverse, he said, without addressing how Apple's absence would affect that goal. — **Reuters**

JOB OPENING

Company Name and Address: Toyota Corolla Sapporo Philippines Holding, Inc. / 256 Batangas North Street, New Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City 1780

Contact details of the Company: customerdesk@tcsphi.ekuruma.co.jp

Available Job Vacancy/Position: Project Vice President of Fleet Management Department

Job Description: The Project Vice President of Fleet Management Department is responsible in starting up Fleet Management Department with proper reporting structure. He/She is expected to form a list of fleet customers within the Laguna region. He/She is also responsible in creating strategic plans to market vehicles to fleet customers as well as to set monthly and yearly targets. Also, this position requires management of Platinum desk customers that will contact us directly or through Primer online magazine.

Basic Qualifications

- At least 10 years experience in Sales and Marketing of Automotive Retail Industry and Business Development
- At least 10 years experience in establishing a used car business with a qualification to assess used cars by a recognized automotive training school
- Can speak English and Japanese, a necessity when dealing with our head office and suppliers in Japan
- Knowledge in accounting / finance a great advantage
- Having managed a team of IT specialists and web designers, with a working knowledge of social media marketing and analytics

Salary Range: PHP 100,000 – 150,000 Monthly

Walk-in applications will not be accepted. Please send your applications via email.

Toyota PHL Sta. Rosa plant eyes carbon neutrality by 2035

CAR MANUFACTURER Toyota Motor Philippines Corp. (TMP) is aiming to make its Santa Rosa production plant in Laguna carbon-neutral by 2035.

TMP said in a statement on Wednesday that it has accelerated its plant carbon neutrality target by 15 years from the originally planned 2050, aligning with the new aim of the global Toyota group to cut carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in all of its manufacturing plants.

“For TMP, I am confident to say that plant carbon neutrality by 2035 is possible. We have 13 years left before our deadline, and we are working continuously to achieve 100% renewable energy (RE) by also exploring offsite power sources,” TMP President Atsuhiko Okamoto said.

As part of the initiative, the local car manufacturer on Wednesday inaugurated a 1.46-megawatt (MW) solar facil-

ity worth P94 million to power its Santa Rosa manufacturing plant and head office. With this, the company boosted its minimum RE ratio to 18%.

“With as much as 2 million kilowatt-hours of derivable clean energy per year, TMP's onsite RE will contribute to 7-10% of the total energy requirement for manufacturing and non-manufacturing operations,” TMP said.

“As a result, the company will reduce its emissions by as much as 1,400 tons of CO₂ per year, equivalent to 2.9 million trees planted over 20 years,” it added.

In 2021, TMP created a plant carbon neutrality (PCN) road map that sets clear targets under the two pillars of RE utilization and energy efficiency, after Toyota Motor Corp. in Japan pulled forward its zero CO₂ emissions goal under the Toyota Environmental Challenge (TEC) 2050.

“These pillars anchor how TMP will achieve its PCN target by using 100% RE from onsite and offsite power sources, applying smart technologies and operational efficiencies in manufacturing, as well as using modern machineries that lean on alternative fuel or energy sources,” TMP said.

TMP began its RE investment in 2018 with the first phase installation of 1-MW TMP solar array, which seeks to achieve the commitments to TEC 2050, particularly the “Challenge 3: Plant Zero CO₂ emissions.” It was a registered joint crediting mechanism (JCM) model project, which received a subsidy from the Japanese government.

“The JCM, a program that funds the diffusion of low carbon infrastructure in developing countries, provided the agreement to use the carbon credits in Japan's emission reduction target,” TMP said.

The second phase is the addition of a 0.46-MW capacity, which began in March 2022. Manila Electric Co. subsidiary MSpectrum, Inc. installed 3,486 panels for the full rooftop solar power system on TMP's main building in Santa Rosa City.

“Through TEC 2050, TMP also aims at reducing indirect emissions that occur in its value chain. TMP implements process improvement activities in logistics operations — from the transportation of parts to the delivery of vehicles to the dealerships,” the company said.

“To date, there are eight suppliers and 26 Toyota dealers that have also invested in RE facilities or entered into RE purchase agreements. Moreover, TMP has the widest lineup of hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) models which provide eco-friendly mobility options to customers,” it added. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

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Available Job Vacancy/Position: Auto Workshop Vice President

Job Description: The Auto Workshop Vice President is responsible in managing the overall complete technician. He/She is also responsible in ensuring that the service bays are maximized. He/She also needs to ensure that jobs are performed with accuracy and completeness based on the Company's standards. He/She also needs to train all technicians to FIX-IT-RIGHT the first time and reduce issues.

Basic Qualifications:

- Having managed an auto dealership's service department of at least 30 service bays
- Able to lead a team of technicians and foreman in order to efficiently allocate service jobs to the appropriate service bay in order to complete the job in time
- Experience in handling customer complaints with a proven track record of having worked in such field
- Must be able to speak, read and write English
- Must be able to speak Japanese to deal with our head office and Japanese suppliers
- Toyota Motor Certified Technical Level 1 (highest level)

Salary Range: PHP 100,000 – 150,000 Monthly

Walk-in applications will not be accepted. Please send your applications via email.

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Contact details of the Company: customerdesk@tcsphi.ekuruma.co.jp

Available Job Vacancy/Position: Senior Technical & Operations Manager

Job Description: The Senior Technical & Operations Manager is responsible in leading the Technician team and maintaining morale for the whole technical team. He/She should ensure that each technician's skills are up-to-date through technical team of MTC and TMP. He/She is also responsible in ensuring technical job stagnation period is kept to a minimum and profits are also maximized. He/She also needs to establish a strong relationship between accounting, finance, parts, service and sales team so that transactions are not delayed. Lastly, he/she needs to train Service Advisors to conduct a proper Walk-Around Check and promote necessary jobs for repair and other accessories.

Basic Qualifications:

- Having worked as a mechanic for at least 15 years in an auto dealership's service department of at least 30 service bays
- Able to lead a team of technicians and foreman in order to efficiently allocate service jobs to the appropriate service bay in order to complete the job in time
- Experience in handling customer complaints with a proven track record of having worked in such field
- Must be able to speak, read and write English
- Must be able to speak Japanese to deal with our head office and Japanese suppliers
- Toyota Motor Certified Technical Level 2 (2nd highest level)

Salary Range: PHP 100,000 – 125,000 Monthly

Walk-in applications will not be accepted. Please send your applications via email.

AllHome opens 4 pet care stores

ALLHOME Corp. on Wednesday announced that it opened four new stores for its specialty brand Pet Buddy as part of its expansion into the pet care industry.

The new PetBuddy stores are in Sta. Rosa, Bacoor, Antipolo and Taguig. Its maiden location opened in Las Piñas last year.

“There is a natural synergy between the building and maintaining of a home and the care of pets, and we are excited to build further on the convenience and value of the AllHome retail experience with PetBuddy,” AllHome Chairman Manuel B. Villar, Jr. said in a statement.

“We are confident that we can apply the same elevated and upgraded product and experience offering that we banner with each AllHome store to a growing pet care market in the Philippines,” he added.

PetBuddy carries a line of pet care products and imported pet products. It also provides grooming and daycare services in all its branches.

The pet store chain is classified as a small specialty format. The addition of the four new PetBuddy stores brings AllHome's small specialty network to 21 and the group's overall store network to 62.

“Pets carry a special place in our hearts, and with the rising middle class of the Philippines, we are observing Filipinos putting more importance in sourcing the right kinds of products and services for these ‘members of the family,’” AllHome Chairman Camille A. Villar said.

She also said that by providing elevated experiences to its customers, the firm is confident in its ability to delight pet owners with the newest concept, one that carries the “signature elevated experience of the AllValue group.”

At the stock exchange on Wednesday, AllHome shares declined by 1.53% or seven centavos to finish at P4.51. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

SB Capital Investment earns valuation accreditation

SB CAPITAL Investment Corp. has secured approval from the stock exchange on its application for accreditation for purposes of issuing fairness opinions and valuation reports of listed companies and prospective initial listing applicants.

“A fairness opinion submitted to the exchange as part of a listing application should be issued by an independent firm duly registered or licensed by the Securities and Exchange Commission and accredited by the exchange,” the Philippine Stock Exchange said in a circular on Wednesday.

The validity period of accreditation of firms has been limited to one year to enable the exchange to confirm the accredited firm's capability and suitability on an annual basis.

The accreditation of the firm will be effective for a period of one year from the date of the issued memorandum.

SB Capital is the wholly-owned investment banking arm of Security Bank Corp.

It provides a range of capital markets products and investment banking services that address the diverse financial needs of corporate and public sector clients.

“Throughout the years, SB Capital's engagements have strengthened its strategic alliances with leading local and international financial institutions, carving out a niche for the company in major growth sectors such as power, energy, healthcare, property, manufacturing, microfinance, and services,” the firm said. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**



Balara Treatment Plant 2

Manila Water upgrades Balara Treatment Plant 2

MANILA Water Co., Inc. has installed filter technology in its Balara Treatment Plant 2 (BTP 2) to reduce its chemical consumption and optimize operations, the listed water provider said on Wednesday.

The activated filter media (AFM) is a highly processed product in the form of particles with enhanced filtration features, lessening the need for additional infrastructure. These are usually composed of recycled green and amber glass. The current filtration media used at BTP 2 are composed of silica sand.

The AFM requires less backwash water and can remove iron and manganese.

“Iron and manganese cause reddish-brown and brownish-black stains that build up in pipelines and water tanks, restricting water flow and reducing water pressure. With the AFM installed, this reduces the chlorine requirement for oxidation of the said

chemicals,” Manila Water Operations Group Director Arnold Jether Mortera said.

He added that with the promising results, the company's operations team plans to scale up by applying AFM on all of BTP 2's filter beds to improve the facility's service.

Manila Water reported that installations for four filter beds are also ongoing. BTP 2 currently has 20 filter beds in operation.

BTP 2 is Manila Water's primary treatment facility that serves more than 60% of the greater Metro Manila's east zone.

Manila Water's service coverage includes Marikina, Pasig, Taguig, Makati, San Juan, Mandaluyong, parts of Quezon City and Manila, and Rizal province.

On Wednesday, Manila Water shares rose by 0.61% or 10 centavos to close at P16.50 at the stock market. — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**