

HONOR's latest foldable Magic V3 now available in the Philippines

HONOR Philippines last week launched in the country its newest foldable smartphone, the HONOR Magic V3.

The new smartphone, which comes in Green and Black, retails for P89,999 and is now available via Globe Postpaid Plans starting at GPlan Plus 1799 with a free HONOR Pad X9 that is valued at P9,999. The device can also be purchased at HONOR Experience and Partner Stores and online via Shopee, Lazada, and TikTok Shop.

"It feels like just yesterday when we launched the HONOR Magic V2 and now, we are ecstatic to introduce HONOR's newest and thinnest foldable smartphone, the HONOR Magic V3. AI (artificial intelligence) is slowly but surely reshaping our industry, enriching and creating new experiences that improves creativity and productivity for consumers all around the world, every day, and right now, it's our priority to make comfort and technology accessible to more Filipinos" HONOR Philippines Vice-President Stephen Cheng said.

The HONOR Magic V3 has AI-enabled hardware capabilities and is the world's thinnest inward foldable phone, the brand said.

"With a sleek folded thickness of 9.2mm and featherlight body weighing just 226g, the HONOR Magic V3 rivals the slimness and weight of a flagship bar phone, ensuring utmost portability for users. This feat is accomplished through the meticulous application of 19 innovative materials and 114 microstructures, propelling foldable devices into a new era of precision and slimness," it said.

"Featuring a dome-shaped octagonal camera module, the HONOR Magic V3 seamlessly combines the architectural beauty of dome structures with technological innovations. This camera module showcases a diamond cut, adding an element of elegance and sleekness to the device's overall appearance," it added.

The foldable phone's body incorporates a special fiber material to boost impact resistance, while the HONOR Super Steel Hinge allows the device to withstand up to 500,000 folding cycles for increased durability, along with the HONOR Super Armored Inner Screen and HONOR Anti-scratch NanoCrystal Shield.

The HONOR Magic V3 has a 6.43-inch external display and a 7.92-inch internal foldable screen.

"Dedicated to prioritizing user well-being and comfort, this device incorporates a range of innovative eye-comfort features, such as the world's first AI Defocus Display technology, 4320Hz Risk-free PWM Dimming, Dynamic Dimming, Circadian Night Display, and Natural Tone Display," HONOR Philippines said.

The phone also has a 5,150mAh silicon-carbon battery that supports 66W wired and 50W wireless HONOR Super-Charge. — **BVR**

Over 70% of Filipinos think account security risks are increasing — GSMA

SOME 71.4% of Filipinos think risks involving account security are increasing, with financial fraud being among their top concerns, according to a survey by GSMA, a global group of mobile operators and organizations across the mobile ecosystem and related industries.

"More than a quarter of respondents from across Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand have been victims of financial crimes, such as online hacking, identity theft and bank card theft," GSMA said in a report titled "Consumer Attitudes Toward Fraud and Opportunities for Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) in Southeast Asia" released on Tuesday.

The report looks into consumer attitudes towards fraud in five Southeast Asian markets, namely the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

According to the study, fraud is a growing concern among consumers, especially involving financial transactions.

The study showed that 82.8% of Filipino respondents said they would change their financial provider for better security. It also said that 28.6% of Filipino respondents have encountered financial fraud at least once, and 26.4% are "very worried" about becoming a victim of fraud.

Several markets also showed concern over SIM (Subscriber Identification Module)-swap fraud, GSMA said. This occurs when a hacker gains control of a mobile number by transferring it to a new SIM card.

It said 71% of Filipino consumers reported the "highest levels of concern" SIM-swap fraud. Consumers in Indonesia (78%) and Singapore (50%) also showed concern over cases of SIM-swap fraud.

"In markets like Indonesia and the Philippines, where SIM-swap fraud is a major concern, MNOs can develop APIs (Application Programmable Interfaces) that provide real-time monitoring and alerts for SIM changes," GSMA said. "These APIs would notify fintech platforms if a user's SIM card has been swapped, allowing them to take preventive actions, such as temporarily locking accounts or requiring additional authentication steps."

It added that more than 60% of respondents in Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines are "very worried" about the misuse or theft of Personally Identifiable Information and financial data, GSMA said.

"These concerns are rooted in the growing number of high-profile data breaches across the region," it added.

Asked who is the most responsible for preventing fraud and ensuring security, respondents in the region said this should be account custodians, or banks and e-wallet providers, among others.

"Between 43% (Malaysia) and 62% (Indonesia) of respondents assigned primary responsibility to the companies operating the services. This places fintech companies, banks, and other financial institutions at the forefront of fraud prevention efforts," GSMA said.

"However, consumers also expect device manufacturers (such as Apple, Google, and Samsung) to play a key role in protecting their accounts. This expectation is higher in markets like the Philippines, where 29% of respondents believe that device manufacturers bear some responsibility, compared to 15% in Indonesia," it added.

About 10-13% of respondents across all five markets covered in the survey said they also expect MNOs and their governments to bear responsibility for the prevention of fraud, it said.

"MNOs in Southeast Asia are uniquely positioned to address the growing concerns about fraud. By developing APIs that integrate with fintech platforms, banks, and digital commerce providers, MNOs can offer enhanced security features, real-time fraud detection, and data-sharing tools that can help protect consumers from various forms of fraud," GSMA said.

"One of the most significant opportunities for MNOs lies in the development of APIs that strengthen account security and prevent fraudulent activities like SIM-swap attacks. The high level of concern surrounding these attacks, particularly in markets like Indonesia and the Philippines, makes this an area of urgent need."

Two-factor authentication and SIM-swap prevention APIs that provide real-time monitoring and alerts for SIM changes can help financial institutions, payment firms and online retailers strengthen account security, GSMA added.

"Given the high penetration of mobile devices across Southeast Asia, with 91% of respondents in Indonesia and 80% in the Philippines accessing their financial accounts via mobile, MNOs are well-positioned to develop APIs that enhance the convenience and security of mobile-first financial services," it said.

"The widespread use of e-wallets in markets like Indonesia and the Philippines presents a significant opportunity for MNOs to develop APIs that integrate mobile services with e-wallet platforms. These APIs would provide fintech and other industries seamless identity verification, transaction monitoring, and secure fund transfers." — **B.M.D. Cruz**

CSB, Game Developer Association sign MoU to upskill students

THE Game Developer Association of the Philippines (GDAP) and the De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde (DLS-CSB) recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to provide workshops and seminars for students looking to enter the gaming industry.

"This shared venture seeks to advocate for student internships, along with exposure and immersion trips for the faculty and associates," GDAP said in a statement.

The partnership is also looking to endorse the micro-credentialing of Benilde courses are relevant to GDAP and the industry.

GDAP serves as the country's premier digital game development trade association. It aims to support growth in the digital gaming industry by spreading awareness and engaging in academic linkages.

"With GDAP's expertise in the field, the cooperation intends to provide cooperative workshops, seminars, and conferences for the Benildean community as well as the public," it said.

GDAP President James Ronald Lo said this is the group's first MoU with a school, which is expected to help in increasing digital gaming professionals in the country.

The partnership between GDAP and DLS-CSB is about building the future of game development in the Philippines, said DLS-CSB Chancellor Benhur A. Ong.

"We incorporated on a business journey to create the very first full game development education curriculum in the country," Mr. Ong was quoted as saying.

The school's game design and development program took 15 years to be finalized, Mr. Ong said.

In 2009, DLS-CSB first introduced gaming design as a program with its Bachelor of Science in Information Technology degree with specialization in Game Design and Development.

Its second gaming-related program, the Bachelor of Science in Interactive Entertainment and Multimedia Computing, was launched in 2015.

"We're not only equipping our students with the skills they need. It's also about helping them engage with real-world challenges," Mr. Ong said.

"We hope that the aim is clear — to bring academia into the industry so that our students can be game changers."

DLS-CSB ROLLS OUT ONLINE ENTRANCE EXAM

Meanwhile, DLS-CSB also announced the implementation of a fully online entrance examination with artificial intelligence (AI)-powered proctoring.

The revamped Benilde Entrance Examination (BEE) aims to offer a flexible and accessible exam option, the school said. The online BEE will be rolled out for the application period for academic year 2025 to 2026.

"To ensure academic integrity and fair assessment, the AI-enabled system adopts facial and voice recognition technology to evaluate the environment, movement, and behavior of the candidates," it said in a separate statement.

"Through this new modality, applicants may accomplish the exam remotely provided that they have a laptop or desktop and a stable internet connection. The technical requirements likewise include a webcam, external microphone or headset, and a mobile phone to be used as a secondary camera."

Applicants will receive exam schedule confirmation and instructions via e-mail and will have to complete a pre-test check prior to the exam.

"For those who need specific assistance or accommodation, the college will offer in-campus examinations to be held at the designated computer laboratory on identified schedules," DLS-CSB said. "Students are expected to accomplish the BEE without aids and tools, apart from plain bond paper and pencil during the Mathematics Exam."

Aside from AI-powered proctors, the online and on-site exams will still be monitored by a human proctor, it added.

"Signed instructions will be made available for the deaf applicants of the School of Deaf Education and Applied Studies." — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

Tourism industry urged to look beyond 'fun' and develop non-traditional visitor offerings

THE tourism industry must start developing other potential attractions beyond the usual fun and adventure-oriented offerings, presenting visitors a diversified and "multi-dimensional" experience, Tourism Secretary Ma. Esperanza Christina G. Frasco said at the BusinessWorld Forecast 2025 forum on Tuesday.

"Applying a multi-dimensional approach towards tourism development will make the Philippines not solely and singularly dependent on fun and adventure," Ms. Frasco said at forum on Tuesday.

Other elements of this approach include improving connectivity, infrastructure, and liberal entry requirements, she said, enabling the Philippines to present to visitors attractions that "we have not yet fully been able to share with the world."



The Department of Tourism is making a major push to develop non-traditional visitor offerings like gastronomy, health, and wellness.

In the next decade, the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) forecasts Philippine travel and tourism to raise its contribution to gross domestic product (GDP) to P9.5 trillion a year, or nearly 22% of economic output.

"On the aspect of infrastructure, we are pleased that with the President's very clear articulation that tourism is a priority, the airports here in Manila have now been privatized and are in the process of improvement," she said.

She also noted plans to expand port infrastructure, terminals, roads and bridges.

The government plans to spend 5-6% of GDP on infrastructure annually.

She cited the need for less restrictive entry requirements for visitors.

"The trend that we saw post-pandemic among our ASEAN neighbors is first, the liberalization of visa policy, (including) an electronic component to applying for a visa, or providing visas on arrival."

"The Philippines still faces the challenge of not being as liberalized and this we foresee to be a continuing challenge," she added.

She said the Department of Foreign Affairs and Bureau of Immigration are working to set up an "efficient, fully functioning, and effective electronic visa travel system for the Philippines." — **Luisa Maria Jacinta C. Jocson**

SRA considering import clearance fee hike for alternative sweeteners

THE SUGAR Regulatory Administration (SRA) said that it is studying an increase in import clearance fees for alternative sweeteners.

"Our (intent) is to gather accurate data on how much are entering and then what is entering. The charges for import clearances are very minimal," SRA Administrator Pablo Luis S. Azcona told reporters.

He said the planned fee hike for high fructose corn syrup is P30 per equivalent bag of sugar and P10 per equivalent bag for all other sweeteners.

Tariff Code 17.02 of the ASEAN Harmonized Tariff Nomenclature sets tariffs only for high fructose corn syrup.

Mr. Azcona added that a Sugar Order (SO) has been drafted and is up for review by the SRA board.

Mr. Azcona said the SRA is looking to approve the SO by next month with a potential effectiveness date of January.

He added that industrial users of alternative sweeteners have also been consulted on the increase in import clearance fees.

"We explained to them that we are first data gathering, and then in the future we will (discuss other policies)," he said.

Agriculture Secretary Francisco P. Tiu Laurel, Jr. has ordered an investigation into the entry of other sweeteners after meeting with the sugar industry. Producers have said such imports compete with cane sugar.

The regulator was tasked to look into the actual volumes of other sweeteners and, if warranted, require them to acquire clearances as well.

Additionally, Mr. Azcona said that the SRA is also seeking to address imports of artificial sweeteners.

"We would want to also monitor the volumes coming in. Based on our information it is quite large, between 200,000 to 300,000 tons," he added.

He said that the regulator will also study the health issues related to artificial sweeteners in potential collaboration with the Department of Health. — **Adrian H. Halili**

Balisacan touts competition policy as tool for boosting economic efficiency

THE GOVERNMENT needs to push competition policy and legislation to make the economy more efficient as companies gear up to enter international markets, National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Secretary Arsenio M. Balisacan said.

"Competition policy can be used to improve how markets work, even as businesses scale up their operations," he said during webinar organized by the Asian

Development Bank (ADB) Tuesday.

Mr. Balisacan was one of the editors of the ADB's "Designing Competition Policy for Economic Development in Asia and the Pacific" report.

The report singled out market rules or structures that confer unfair advantages to certain businesses, limit consumer choices, reduce product and service quality, and lead to higher prices.

"Just to be sure, nothing is inherently

wrong with bigness or dominance, but it must not be abused or used to foreclose competitors in both input and output markets," he added.

He warned of the risks of "picking winners," resulting in significant waste in the allocation of scarce public resources and worsening inequality.

He said the Philippine approach to promoting competition includes the Konektadong Pinoy bill, which seeks to

make internet access more affordable and equitable even in remote areas by removing barriers to entry in data transmission.

However, the report noted that government policy may itself be the source of anticompetitive practices.

He cited the example of the Philippine Bureau of Plant Industry, which issues import permits for onions to a few large importers, giving them significant market power. — **Aubrey Rose A. Inosante**

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