

Midrange smartphone HONOR X8d now available in the Philippines

HONOR PHILIPPINES last week launched the latest addition to its X Series lineup of smartphones, the HONOR X8d, which it said is primarily designed for students.

The phone launched on March 19 is priced at P15,999, has three colorways — Light Blue, Velvet Black, Velvet Grey — and is now available for pre-order. Customers who will pre-order at any HONOR Experience and Partner Stores until March 27 can get free HONOR Camping Light Speakers. Those pre-ordering via online channels get a free HONOR Earbuds II.

“Today’s students are creative, expressive, and always on the move. We offer HONOR X8d to match that energy — sleek, capable, and budget-friendly. It proves that you don’t have to spend more to stand out and stay connected,” HONOR Philippines Vice-President Stephen Cheng said in a statement.

The HONOR X8d features a 7.5mm ultra-thin and lightweight design and has an SGS Premium Performance Certification of Drop & Crush Resistance, ensuring it can withstand drops from heights of up to two meters. It also has

an IP65 water resistance rating and wet-hand touch enhancement.

The phone has a 6.77-inch OLED display with a refresh rate of 120Hz and peak HDR brightness of 3000 nits.

“The device also boasts 6 eye-care technologies, including 3840Hz PWM Risk-free Dimming, Circadian Night Display, Dynamic Dimming, Comfortable Dim-light Adjustment, Low Blue Light and E-Book Mode.”

It is powered by the Snapdragon 6s 4G Gen 2 chip, complemented by HONOR’s RAM Turbo Technology that provides a 16GB RAM equivalent (8GB physical + 8GB virtual) experience.

The HONOR X8d also sports a 7,000mAh battery, providing up to 52 hours of battery life. It also supports fast charging via 45-watt wired HONOR SuperCharge.

“The test data shows that the device can stand up to 31 hours of video playback on a single charge. With multi-point temperature monitoring, the battery shows great performance in temperatures from -20°C to 45°C, which allows it to work perfectly in various harsh conditions.”

The phone comes with various AI features, headlined by an Instant AI Button

at the side. It runs on the latest MagicOS 10 based on Android 16.

The HONOR X8d also has a 108-megapixel Ultra-Clear AI Camera, with integrated AI photography features including AI Eraser, AI Upscale, AI Cutout and AI Outpainting.

“With 3x Lossless Zoom, users can create stunning shots with diverse focal lengths, effortlessly creating different street vibes. With HONOR Connection, the HONOR X8d breaks the long-standing ‘drop-barrier’ between different systems, enabling the device to share moving photo to iOS seamlessly,” the brand said. — **BVR**

Fortinet rolls out local secure access service edge PoP in PHL

FORTINET has rolled out a local FortiSASE Point-of-Presence (PoP) in the Philippines to make its security services more accessible to enterprises.

“The new FortiSASE PoP enables organizations to access security services locally, improving user experience, strengthening compliance alignment, and supporting the country’s rapidly evolving digital economy,” Fortinet said in a statement. “The FortiSASE deployment leverages Fortinet’s global cloud-delivered security architecture to bring enforcement closer to users while maintaining consistent protection across distributed environments.”

“Our local FortiSASE PoP reflects Fortinet’s long-term dedication to the Philippines’ digital future. By bringing advanced security and networking capabilities closer to organizations, we are helping improve performance,

strengthen local cybersecurity capabilities, and enable partners and customers to scale securely as hybrid work and cloud adoption continue to expand,” said Bambi Escalante, Fortinet country manager for the Philippines.

The company added that this aligns its SASE or secure access service edge capabilities with local cloud regions, workforce development, and ecosystem collaboration, ultimately helping boost the country’s cybersecurity landscape.

It said Philippine enterprises are accelerating adoption of SASE architectures. According to the Cybersecurity in the Philippines Report by the ASEAN Innovation Business Platform and Fortinet released last year, nearly 80% of surveyed organizations said they are either implementing or actively exploring SASE solutions, which shows growing demand

for integrated, cloud-delivered security.

“By bringing FortiSASE closer to users and applications, Fortinet helps organizations improve operational efficiency, strengthen cyber resilience, and support modern workplace initiatives,” it said.

“The Philippines deployment is part of Fortinet’s broader expansion of secure access infrastructure across Southeast Asia, aimed at bringing security closer to users and applications worldwide.”

Though the PoP, Philippine enterprises will be able to securely connect their users to the web, cloud, and private applications and simplify operations across hybrid environments. It integrates cloud-delivered security services with SD-WAN under a single operating system, client, and management framework.

This will allow for lower-latency secure access and AI-powered

threat protection, supporting their digital growth.

“This unified approach delivers consistent security policy enforcement, end-to-end visibility, and zero-trust access, helping organizations reduce complexity while maintaining strong protection across distributed environments,” it said.

“Investing in local infrastructure is about building confidence and resilience as organizations modernize their digital environments. The new FortiSASE PoP enables Philippine enterprises to innovate securely while accelerating adoption of next-generation networking and security practices, supporting the country’s continued growth as a dynamic digital economy,” said Peer-apong Jongvibool, Fortinet regional director for Southeast Asia and Hong Kong. — **BVR**

OpenAI drops AI video tool Sora, startling Disney

ON MONDAY evening, Walt Disney Co. and OpenAI teams were working together on a project linked to Sora, OpenAI’s artificial intelligence (AI) video tool. Just 30 minutes after that meeting, the Disney team was blindsided with word that OpenAI was dropping the tool altogether, a person familiar with the matter said.

OpenAI announced the move publicly on Tuesday.

“It was a big rug-pull,” according to the person, who requested anonymity to discuss the matter.

The move is the first big step by the ChatGPT maker to focus its business on potentially more lucrative areas such as coding tools and corporate customers.

But the abrupt cancellation of Sora illustrates how messy the streamlining process

may become as OpenAI prepares for a stock market debut that could come as early as later this year.

The Sora decision means the end of a blockbuster \$1-billion deal between Disney and the ChatGPT maker that was announced a little more than three months ago. As part of the three-year deal, Disney said it would invest \$1 billion in OpenAI and lend more than 200 of its iconic characters to be used in short, AI-generated videos.

But the transaction between the companies never closed, two other people familiar with the matter said, and no money changed hands.

OpenAI executives have been debating Sora’s fate for some time.

Running the AI video app required significant computational resources, a fourth person with knowledge of the matter said, and left other teams with less firepower.

Even so, some OpenAI staffers on the Sora team were surprised when they were informed of the changes on Tuesday morning, one of the people and another source said. The announcement was made just a day after OpenAI published a blog post about Sora safety standards.

“We’re saying goodbye to Sora ... we know this news is disappointing,” the Sora team said in a post on X, adding that timelines for the app and API, as well as details on preserving user work, would be shared later. — **Reuters**

FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code or by typing the link tinyurl.com/5dw7bjtx

Marcos, from S1/1

At the same time, the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has approved the release of P20 billion to the DoE to secure fuel supply for the country.

The funds were released on March 24 through a Special Allotment Release Order (SARO) and Notice of Cash Allocation (NCA), which was sourced from the Malampaya Gas Fund under the Special Account in the General Fund (SAGF), the DBM said in a statement.

The P20 billion will fund the “strategic procurement of fuel products — including diesel, gasoline, and liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) — to boost national fuel inventory, stabilize pump prices, and ensure uninterrupted operations across transport, logistics, agriculture, emergency response, and other critical sectors.”

It will be implemented by the Philippine National Oil Company-Exploration Corporation, which has already started procurement.

‘DO NOT PANIC’

On Tuesday evening, Mr. Marcos placed the country under a national state of energy emergency under Executive Order (EO) No. 110, noting the ongoing war’s imminent threat to the country’s energy supply. The order will be in effect for a year.

The President on Wednesday clarified that the declaration

was only a “precautionary tool” and that only the energy sector was covered by the state of emergency.

“I want to assure everyone that this does not mean that we should panic. It means that we are doing everything that we can to assess and to alleviate the situation,” Mr. Marcos said.

Under the EO, the President created the Unified Package for Livelihoods, Industry, Food, and Transport (UPLIFT) committee for a coordinated response in stabilizing fuel supply, sustaining economic activity and protecting sectors most exposed to rising energy costs.

The EO also allows authorities to focus interventions on ensuring adequate energy supply and mitigating price spikes while mobilizing government resources more efficiently.

“The source of the problem is the supply and the price of energy, and that is what we need to address directly... The reason that I declared an energy emergency is to provide government with more options should the need arise,” Mr. Marcos said.

Transport workers are planning a two-day strike starting Thursday to protest surging oil prices and demand a fare hike, a move Mr. Marcos rejected last week.

FULL STORY



Read the full story by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or by typing the link <https://tinyurl.com/y7m6nr2j>

EVs, from S1/1

Since the enactment of the Electric Vehicle Industry Development Act in 2022, the Philippines has sought to promote the development and adoption of EVs by mandating a higher share of EVs in corporate and government fleets.

Under the Comprehensive Roadmap for the Electric Vehicle Industry, the business-as-usual scenario target is a 10% EV fleet share by 2040, while it sets a clean energy scenario target of at least 50%.

Before the Iran war, the DoE had calculated that fuel costs for a conventional car averaged about P5 per kilometer (km), compared with roughly P1.75 per km for an electric vehicle.

Energy Secretary Sharon S. Garin earlier said that EVs are cheaper to operate compared with fuel-powered cars because electricity costs rise less sharply than fuel prices.

“We only use 3% of diesel on our electricity. The other fuels like coal and gas are affected because of the transportation and logistics costs, but not in proportion to the increase [in fuel prices] so it won’t increase as much,” she said.

“Actually, there should be a major campaign already in the Philippines for electric vehicles and hybrid with what we’re experiencing,” she added.

BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION

Nigel Paul C. Villarete, a senior adviser on public-private partnerships at the technical advisory group Libra Konsult, said the heightened interest in EVs is already expected since fuel is the largest component of the operational costs of running private cars.

“Electric vehicles are ‘relatively new’ so rising fuel costs would indeed stoke the interest of those who are buying new cars,” Mr. Villarete told *BusinessWorld*.

Since not everyone can afford to buy an electric car, analysts said the current situation highlights the need for better public transportation.

“[Public transportation] will always be the more efficient and more effective mode of mobility compared with private car use which, among mobility planners and managers, is the most wasteful, both in terms of space needed and money used,” Mr. Villarete said.

He said that private car use comes at a high economic cost compared with the far more efficient public transport system.

“But we live in a capitalistic society where the private (sector) wants to dictate over public good, so what the government has to ensure is the availability of the more efficient and cost-effective alternative in the hope of contributing more to national economic benefits,” he said.

Rene S. Santiago, an international consultant on transport development and former president of the Transportation Science Society of the Philippines, said rising fuel prices will widen the advantage of EVs and hybrids over traditional or internal combustion engine vehicles.

Career Opportunity in **Salmon Bank (Rural Bank) Inc.**

PRODUCT MANAGER

Job Description:

- Product Roadmap:** Define and lead the roadmap for customer support, aligning technical, operational, and business priorities.
- Chat Experience:** Own the end-to-end chatbot product — improve its intelligence, usability, and automation coverage.
- Cross-Functional Onboarding of New Products:** Oversee process design and readiness for the support of new product/feature launches, in close collaboration with Business Process Analysts.
- FAQ and Deflection Strategy:** Drive the strategy behind self-service content (FAQ, help center) and deflection mechanics to reduce inbound ticket volume.

Job Qualifications:

- 3+ years of product management experience, ideally with internal tools or operational product ownership.
- Deep understanding of customer service workflows and metrics (e.g. CSAT, deflection rate, FRT).
- Experience working on or with chatbots, contact center platforms, or automation systems.
- Excellent stakeholder communication and ability to work across functions (Ops, Product, Engineering, Design).

Application may be sent to: Joey Regine Alban
j.alban@salmon.group

Company / Employer	Name of foreign national intending to apply for the position
SALMON BANK (RURAL BANK) INC. Address: 6th Floor One/Neo Building, 3rd Avenue corner 26th St, Bonifacio Global City, Fort Bonifacio Taguig City Metro Manila 1634 Nature of Business: Rural Banking/Finance Institutions	Name: RUSTAM TUGUSHEV Address: Taguig City Nationality: Russian Intended Period of Employment: Three (3) Years

Salmon Bank (Rural Bank) Inc. hereby declares that the above-named foreign national is able, willing, and qualified to perform the services and job description for this position. The company has the intention to employ the said foreign national and apply for an **Alien Employment Permit with the Department of Labor and Employment – National Capital Region located at 967 Maligna Street, Malate Manila.**

Career Opportunity in **Salmon Bank (Rural Bank) Inc.**

BUSINESS PROCESS ANALYST

Job Description:

- Documentation:** Create and maintain process documentation, including flowcharts and process maps, to facilitate understanding and adherence to new procedures
- Training and Support:** Provide training to team members on new processes and technologies, ensuring smooth transitions, and adherence to best practices
- Analyzing Current Processes:** Evaluate existing business processes to identify bottlenecks and areas for improvement
- Designing Solutions:** Develop and implement new processes, procedures, and technologies to enhance operational efficiency

Job Qualifications:

- Relevant work experience in business analysis and process improvement, familiarity with business process management software
- Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, excellent communication abilities, and proficiency in data analysis and process mapping

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SALMON BANK (RURAL BANK) INC. Address: 6th Floor One/Neo Building, 3rd Avenue corner 26th St, Bonifacio Global City, Fort Bonifacio Taguig City Metro Manila 1634 Nature of Business: Rural Banking/Finance Institutions	Name: MAGOMED ZUBAILOV Address: Taguig City Nationality: Russian Intended Period of Employment: Three (3) Years

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Career Opportunity in **Salmon Bank (Rural Bank) Inc.**

PRODUCT MANAGER

Job Description:

- Overseeing and prioritizing product development projects
- Monitoring and evaluating product performance and customer feedback to drive continuous improvement
- Conducting competitive analysis and market research
- Setting, tracking and reporting on product performance metrics

Job Qualifications:

- Proven track record of managing all aspects of a successful product throughout its lifecycle
- Proven ability to develop product and marketing strategies and effectively communicate recommendations to executive management
- Solid technical background with understanding and hands-on experience in software development and web technologies

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PRODUCT MANAGER

Job Description:

- Working closely with the engineering, sales, marketing, and support teams to ensure the successful launch and positioning of products.
- Planning and managing product launches.
- Overseeing and prioritizing product development projects.
- Monitoring and evaluating product performance and customer feedback to drive continuous improvement.
- Conducting competitive analysis and market research.

Job Qualifications:

- Proven track record of managing all aspects of a successful product throughout its lifecycle.
- Proven ability to develop product and marketing strategies and effectively communicate recommendations to executive management.
- Solid technical background with understanding and hands-on experience in software development and web technologies.

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CREATIVE PRODUCER

Job Description:

- Maintain clear communication with creative, design, and performance marketing teams to align goals and timelines.
- Supervise shoots and ensure timely delivery of raw materials to design and post-production.
- Source and manage actors, influencers, and creators — including casting, contracting, and scheduling.
- Coordinate with legal teams to ensure all materials meet brand, privacy, and IP standards.

Job Qualifications:

- Excellent communication and negotiation skills to work with internal teams and external vendors.
- Solid understanding of video, photo, and digital creative workflows.
- Proven experience as a Creative Producer or Project Manager in production or marketing.
- Experience with contracts and working alongside legal or compliance teams.

Application may be sent to: Joey Regine Alban
j.alban@salmon.group

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SALMON BANK (RURAL BANK) INC. Address: 6th Floor One/Neo Building, 3rd Avenue corner 26th St, Bonifacio Global City, Fort Bonifacio Taguig City Metro Manila 1634 Nature of Business: Rural Banking/Finance Institutions	Name: OLGA LISHOVCHENKO Address: Taguig City Nationality: Russian Intended Period of Employment: Three (3) Years

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