

Apple unboxes Delhi carton, opens its 2nd store in Saket

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After Apple's first retail store in Mumbai's Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC), the iPhone maker opened its second flagship outlet in New Delhi's Saket on Thursday. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Tim Cook inaugurated the physical retail store.

The opening of the Apple store coincides with the company's 25th anniversary in India.

On Thursday morning, a large crowd gathered at Select Citywalk to witness the opening of the tech giant's second official retail store in India. Cook welcomed customers and even took photos with fans before the store opened its doors at 10 am on the dot.

"What an incredible reception, Delhi, thank you! We're delighted to welcome our customers to our newest store — Apple Saket," 62-year-old Cook tweeted, shortly after the store's launch.

Appleheads trickled in as early as 6 am. Some wanted to upgrade. Most wanted to meet

and greet the CEO and experience the store.

Thirty-year-old Ayush wanted to show his prized collection to Cook and perhaps get it autographed: the iBook G3 clamshell — Apple's first laptop with WiFi connectivity launched in 1999; the original iPhone — retroactively known as iPhone 2G; and an Apple Watch Series 0 — the first-generation wearable which was the very first product announced by Cook after he took over the reins in 2011.

Diljot Singh, a native of Punjab, was lucky to get his iPad signed by Cook. "I couldn't have asked for more," he gushed.

About half the size of the Mumbai store at 8,400 square feet, the Apple Saket store employs 70 retail team members — 50 per cent being women — who come from 18 different states in India and collectively speak more than 15 languages.

Belying its small size, the Saket store offers all the expected services like any other Apple store. It features a uniquely designed curved storefront with white oak tables displaying Apple products and accessories, as well as a

feature wall.

There's a dedicated Apple Pickup station. Apple Pickup allows buyers to order online and collect their devices in-store at a convenient time.

For hands-on technical and hardware support, visitors can make a reservation at the Genius Bar for help from a 'genius', of course.

The Apple of India's eye

Notwithstanding the relatively small 4.6 per cent market share for Apple's smartphones in India, the Cupertino-headquartered firm is the top dog in the premium segment, according to data from IDC India, a market intelligence platform.

Apple has been on an incremental path towards cutting a bigger piece of the smartphone pie in India. The firm's smartphone shipments grew from 2.7 million in 2020 to 4.8 million in 2021, to reach 6.7 million in 2022.

The new stores in Mumbai and New Delhi are Apple's first step in building a larger, more-personalised retail footprint in India.



Apple CEO Tim Cook met a 5-year-old coder, Ranvir Sachdev, at India's second Apple store at Saket in New Delhi

PHOTO:PTI

'Apple will treble exports, investment in coming yrs'

Apple could double or triple investments in India, along with exports, over the next few years, Rajeev Chandrasekhar, deputy minister for information technology said, as the company opened a second store in the world's biggest smartphone market after China.

"I am very confident that this Apple-India partnership has a lot of headroom for investments, growth, exports, and jobs - doubling and tripling over coming years," Chandrasekhar told *Reuters*.

Apple assembles iPhones in India, but plans to expand into iPads and AirPods. Its iPhones made up more than half of total smartphones worth about \$9 billion exported from India between April 2022 and February, data from the India Cellular and Electronics Association shows. **REUTERS**

