BEATS GLOBAL SLOWDOWN WITH LOCAL GAINS

iPhone's 28% Q1 Revenue Jump in India Helps Apple Beat Samsung

Wholesale earnings topped $2.92 b led by the iPhone 16 base model, which made up 65% of shipments, according to analysts

Subhrojit Mallick

New Delhi: Apple's wholesale revenues in India from iPhones climbed up to 28% to $2.53-$2.92 billion in the March quarter, driven by record sales, outpacing an overall weak period through which the world's most profitable company recorded overall revenue shrinkage globally, said market trackers.

Apple also held the highest share of wholesale revenues in the March quarter, surpassing Korean rival Samsung in a market that has been steadily declining in both volume and value, market trackers added.

According to Canalys, Apple's wholesale revenues from iPhone sales grew 28% on-year to $2.92 billion in Q1 2025, driven by record iPhone sales during the period. IDC pegged Apple's wholesale revenues to $2.53 billion, a 6% growth from $2.38 billion. The data was exclusively shared with **ET**.

Wholesale revenues refer to the income generated by a business from selling goods or services in large quantities to retailers or other businesses, rather than directly to consumers.

Sequentially, Apple's revenues were down 21% from $3.69 billion in the December quarter, which typically sees higher sales of its Pro models in India.

In the March quarter, the base iPhone 16 was the highest selling handset for the brand, data from market research firm, Canalys, exclusively available with ET, showed.

The research firm said that as broader demand in the smartphones market softened, brands like Apple and Samsung anchored their strategies around upgrading existing customers to higher-end models and increasing the average selling prices (ASP).

Overall industry ASP grew 4% on-year in Q1 2025 to $274, with Apple commanding the highest ASP among all brands operating in India, at around $1,000. Experts attributed the high ASP as the key reason behind Apple's strong revenues despite not clocking volumes like some of its rivals such as Vivo, Oppo, Samsung and Realme.

"65% of (Apple) shipments in Q1'25 was driven by iPhone 16 series, followed by previous generation iPhones like 13/14/15...The iPhone 16 was the highest shipped device nationally, with all brands put together in the March quarter," Upasana Joshi, senior research manager, IDC Asia Pacific, said. The market tracker pegged Apple's first quarter shipments at a record three million, up 23% on year.

Apple's revenue growth came even as overall industry revenues fell 1.4% on-year as shipments fell 6% on-year to 32 million units. The company had a 28.5% share in overall industry revenues in the March quarter, up from 25.6% a year ago, IDC said.

The Cupertino-based major has consistently been the market leader in value terms since Q4 2023, as consumer preference towards premium handsets became more pronounced, with Apple reaping the highest benefit.

The premium segment ($600-$800) in Q1 2025 registered the highest growth of 78.6%, with its share up from 2% to 4%. The segment, where Apple is the market leader in volume terms, contributes a large chunk of industry revenues, IDC said.

The company broke into the top five brands for the second consecutive quarter, ranking fifth with a 9.5% market share, according to IDC.

Apple's sales were aided by affordability schemes, specifically no-cost EMI schemes. IDC said that while online channel shipments declined for Apple, the company's efforts to bolster its presence across physical retail stores drove volume growth.

The company plans to open two more exclusive retail stores in India later this year, in Bengaluru and Pune, as part of a retail expansion strategy as focus on the India market grows for the company.

In contrast, Apple's shipments in China, which is among its largest markets by volume and value, declined 9% from a year earlier in the March quarter, as the company failed to capitalise on government subsidies for smartphones and other consumer electronics which boosted sales of its rivals.

Singtel to Offload 50m Airtel Shares Worth $1 b Through a Block Deal

Our Bureau

Mumbai | Kolkata: Singapore Telecommunications (Singtel) is set to sell Bharti Airtel shares worth $1 billion, or about ₹8,555 crore, in a block deal, top investment banking sources told **ET**.

The Singapore-based telco is expected to sell around 50 million shares in Bharti Airtel at ₹1,800 apiece, one of the sources said. The floor price, he added, has been fixed at a 3.6% discount to the current market price.

JP Morgan is slated to broker the deal.

Airtel shares closed 1.77% higher at ₹1,866.80 on the BSE on Thursday.

Singtel and the Mittal family effectively own 29.49% and 22.93%, respectively, in Airtel through a mix of direct and indirect holdings. Singtel's direct holding in India's second-largest telco—held via its affiliate Pastel—is now at 9.49%.

Singtel also holds a 49.44% stake in Bharti Telecom (BTL), the main promoter-level controlling company of Sunil Mittal-led Bharti Airtel. The Mittal family-backed Bharti Group owns the majority 50.56% stake in BTL.

The floor price has been fixed at a 3.6% discount to the current market price

SingTel and Airtel didn't respond to ET's emailed queries until press time Thursday.

In recent years, Singtel and the Mittal family have been shifting their direct holdings in Bharti Airtel to BTL, which has been funding such deals via debt. Consequently, BTL's debt levels have increased because of its rising stake in Airtel. BTL's stake in Airtel is now at 40.47%.

Back in September 2022, Singtel had sold a 3.33% direct stake in Airtel via multiple block deals to BTL for about ₹14,500 crore. Last year, it sold another 0.8% in Airtel, through Pastel, to US investment firm GQG Partners for about ₹5,885 crore.

Last November, a top Singtel executive had said the promoters of Airtel—Singtel and the Mittal family—were preparing a plan for each of them to hold equal direct stakes in India's second-largest telco.

Industry executives had then said the exercise was part of Singtel's plans to boost shareholder returns and increase returns on invested capital. They had said the Singapore-based carrier has also set in motion a value unlocking strategy to raise funds for other ventures like data centres.

Trump's 'Advice' Unlikely to Sway Apple's India Manufacturing Plans

ON TRACK Tech giant and its suppliers see value, here for the long term, say officials

Dia Rekhi & Kirtika Suneja

Chennai | New Delhi: There is likely to be little or no impact on Apple Inc's India plans from US President Donald Trump's advice to the iPhone maker's chief executive Tim Cook against making in India, senior government officials told **ET**.

"Companies have taken a long-term bet on India and there is unlikely to be an impact due to one statement," one of the officials said.

"We have spoken to all significant players, and all their plans are on track," said a second official.

Apple has been deepening its footprint in India through various partners. Taiwanese contract manufacturer Foxconn, one of its largest suppliers, has been doubling down on its India operations to satiate Apple's plans to diversify production beyond China. Other suppliers like Tata Electronics too have been aggressively expanding operations in the country. Further, the Cupertino, California-based firm has been engaged in talks with several Indian firms to onboard them as suppliers, in a bid to boost its localisation efforts in the country.

Queries sent to Apple remained unanswered at press time Thursday.

"Suppliers have not received any communication from Apple or any other companies to stop their expansion in India as yet," an industry source aware of the developments told **ET**. "Everything is going as per plan for the new launches later in the year as well."

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India is coming up as a country that can give strong competitive edge to high-tech industries, making it a natural choice for the likes of Apple, a third senior government official said.

"We are a significant player in smartphones. If companies recognise the value of manufacturing in India, they will continue to do so. Any company like Apple will focus on their competitiveness and that will inform their investment decision. India has shown its value to make in India," the official said.

"Companies go to places where they can reduce costs and be more competitive. Business is guided by cost, revenue and profitability principles... India has shown its value to Make in India. We are an attractive destination. Irrespective of protectionism, India will continue to attract such companies to make in India," the official added.

The Indian government also said other companies also remain committed to investing in the India manufacturing growth story. India's electronics manufacturing ecosystem is coming up in a big way with several aspects and schemes including those directed at chips and components in place, officials said.

Speaking at a business event in Doha on Thursday, Trump said: "I said Tim (Cook), we are treating you really good, we put up with all the plants you built in China for years. We are not interested in you building in India. India can take care of themselves."

He said: "You can build in India, if you want to take care of India because India is one of the highest tariff nations in the world, so it is very hard to sell in India."

Trump claimed that New Delhi offered a deal to Washington DC that it would charge no tariffs on US goods. India has not made any such announcements.

Apart from Apple, companies like Google and Samsung have also been significantly expanding their presence in the country and India's smartphone manufacturing ecosystem in particular has taken off, buoyed by incentives from the government.

India's annual electronics production crossed ₹11 lakh crore ($129 billion), union minister for electronics and information technology Ashwini Vaishnaw said recently. The country is targeting $500 billion in domestic electronics production by FY31. It is projected to reach $300 billion by next year.

LOOKS TO REDUCE RELIANCE ON US MARKET

Arvind Expects UK FTA to Boost Textile Exports

Shabori Das

Bengaluru: Apparel manufacturer Arvind expects the free trade agreement (FTA) with the UK to make India a big textile and apparel sourcing destination for the British market and open up more business opportunities for the company. The development will help the company minimise its dependence on the US, which is one of its major markets now, vice chairman Punit Lalbhai told analysts during the fourth-quarter earnings call Thursday. At present, the UK contributes less than 2% to its sales.

Company's Q4 net profit rose nearly 30% to ₹93 cr, while revenue from operations grew 5% to ₹1,994.9 cr

"The signing of the FTA between India and the UK is a very important event, especially for the textile and apparel business. I think India will become a very important sourcing destination for the UK, and I think it will also benefit Arvind, significantly in securing the right kind of rebalancing to the US dependence," Lalbhai said.

On Thursday, Arvind reported a nearly 30% increase in standalone net profit for the fourth quarter at ₹93 crore. Revenue from operations grew 5% to ₹1,994.9 crore.

Earlier this month, India and the UK concluded the FTA after 15 rounds and three years of discussions. This will reduce the duty on Indian textile in the UK to zero from 12% at present.

As per a recent report by India Ratings & Research, India's textile exports to the UK totalled ₹16,000 crore in fiscal 2024. With 0% tax, even 2-3% growth in India's contribution to UK's textile imports will have a huge impact in the long term, the report said.

Lalbhai said Arvind's customers in the US "are only talking about increasing business rather than decreasing business ... I think this is the year where we also add significantly to the garment volume growth over last year in the textile space".