

Buying a smartphone? Be a wise geek

BS REPORTER

Those looking for a new smartphone this festive season will find themselves flooded with choices — whether it is form-factor, mobile operating system or the price range. While Apple's new iPhone 5, Samsung's new Note II, Sony's flagship Xperia devices already crowd the retail shelves,

some more top-range smartphone launches from Nokia, Samsung and HTC, among others, will add more options for buyers in the weeks leading up to the holiday shopping season.

Last week iPhone 5 made its debut in Indian markets and soon Microsoft's new Windows Phone 8 operating system can be experienced on the Nokia Lumia 920 and 820, Samsung Ativ S and HTC's

Windows Phone 8X and Windows Phone 8S. These devices, designed specifically for Windows Phone 8, are expected to be available in stores and online in November. Google too announced on its blog the launch of a new LG Nexus 4 handset that will start shipping November 13.

So, how does one pick the right smartphone out of the confusing array? Here's what you need to keep in mind.



iPhone 5



Galaxy Note 2



Sony Xperia SL-2



HTC 8X



Nexus 4

Those ...	First choice	Second choice
...who are on to their second or third smartphones	<p>Having used a smartphone gives you an edge to experiment with newer OSes like Windows Phone 8, Android's latest JellyBean etc. While it may be hard for many to put money on a just-out Windows Phone 8 device but do not hesitate on Samsung's Galaxy Note II.</p> <p>For ₹39,990, Galaxy Note II sports a 5.5-inch display which is bigger than any smartphone out there. Besides, a 1.6GHz quad core processor with 2GB of RAM also puts the hardware ahead of the iPhone 5. Billed as a 'phablet' and comes with a stylus, Note II is convenient enough for creating content on the go.</p>	<p>Google's Nexus 4, announced last week, is another stellar smartphone that's a must have for any seasoned smartphone user. The 8GB model starts at about ₹16,000 (US price) which makes it even more hard to resist. Manufactured by LG, Nexus 4's 4.7 inch display looks fantastic and the pure JellyBean OS whizzes along without a care in the world thanks to the 1.5GHz quad-core processor and 2GB of RAM house inside the shiny case. Place it alongside the new iPhone 5, Samsung Galaxy SIII and you will know why it needs to be your next smartphone.</p>
...who are using the smartphone for the first time	<p>You need a simple user interface that will not confuse you with its features — that's where Apple iPhone 5 fit in easily.</p> <p>iPhone 5, which comes with latest version of Apple's iOS, has several new features that simplify the interface even more. Starting at ₹45,500, many would find the 4-inch display just the right size for one-handed use and a stunning Retina display resolution will ensure you never pick up a featurephone or mediocre smartphone again. Even with just an 8MP camera onboard, the pictures and videos on device look stunning, in fact better than they would on a PC monitor.</p>	<p>What sets the iPhone range apart from the others is the combination of its OS with the experience and the future-proofing that comes with it. That's why we are recommending a year-old smartphone iPhone 4 here.</p> <p>Starting at ₹26,500, it can run the latest iOS 6 version (like iPhone 5) and can run the same apps that run on iPads or iPhone 5. Yes, it has just 5 MP camera (but captures HD video) and no voice assistant Siri but these do not chip away its value as an easy-to-get-around smartphone.</p>
...who want a smartphone that is designed to look different	<p>Take a look at HTC 8X — we guarantee that this will be the phone that evokes involuntary gasps at first sight. It's beautifully designed, back panels sport the most eye-catching colours and is a thing to show off.</p> <p>Priced at ₹35,000, it sports a 4.3" Gorilla Glass packing in 341 pixels per inch (yes, it's sharper than the Retina display of the iPhone 5). Those prone to dropping their handsets will like the fact that screen is wrapped in polycarbonate, with a matt-finish that gives a good grip and protects from daily wear & tear. HTC's Beats Audio add-on is feature of the 8X that ensures a killer music experience.</p>	<p>Sony Ericsson's Xperia SL is one heck of a smartphone that shows-off Sony's capabilities in imaging & display. Like the 4.3-inch display that includes a Mobile Bravia engine to boost image quality should be seen to be believed and the boxy design that gives comfort to those who don't like anorexic devices. Priced at ₹32,500, Xperia SL is powered by a dual core 1.7 GHz processor and loaded with a 12 MP camera, which we believe, is best amongst the existing crop of smartphones. While Sony launched it with Android Ice Cream Sandwich version, we are sure it will be upgraded to JellyBean soon.</p>
...who want a smartphone that comes with best app ecosystem	<p>Look no more beyond the iPhone 5 (or the older models of the company).</p> <p>It was on Apple's app store where the now iconic, Angry Birds, was first published, appreciated and went on to be replicated across app stores on different mobile OSes. There's no dearth of free and paid quality apps on the iOS devices when the app store offers 700,000 apps (as of today). Unlike Android's app store, Apple takes great efforts to curate its app ecosystem, frequently turning away legally dubious, ethically questionable or non-functioning apps from its tightly controlled store</p>	<p>While yet to be officially launched, we are putting Nokia Lumia 920 & 820 here because of its music store, mix radio and ever growing library of multimedia content that the company keeps adding.</p> <p>Windows Phone apps hover at about 120,000 apps today, and this would make smartphone buyers value Nokia's music library — 4.5 million DRM free songs — even more. Also, Nokia's navigation apps like Nokia Drive, Nokia Transit and Nokia city Lens are a definite plus.</p>