

## Tim Cook defends Apple's tight control of App Store for iPhone users



**SAN FRANCISCO:** Apple's online marketplace would become a "toxic" mess if the iPhone maker were forced to allow third-party apps without reviewing them, chief executive Tim Cook told a high-stakes trial challenging the company's tight control of its platform.

Cook, the last scheduled witness in the case brought by Fortnite maker Epic Games, offered a robust defense of Apple's procedures for reviewing and approving all the apps it offers for iPhone and iPad users.

"We could no longer make the promise... of privacy, safety and security," without full control of the marketplace, Cook said under questioning from Apple attorney Veronica Moya in federal court in California. Cook said Apple's review process helps keep out malicious software and other problematic apps, helping create a safe place for consumers.

Without this review, the online marketplace "would become a toxic kind of mess," he said.

"It would also be terrible for the developer, because the developer depends on the store being a safe and trusted place." Cook's testimony caps a high-profile trial which opened earlier this month in which Apple is accused of abusing a monopoly on its marketplace by creating a "walled garden" that squeezes app makers. Epic, maker of the popular Fortnite video game, is seeking to force Apple to open up the marketplace to third parties seeking to circumvent Apple's procedures and commissions of up to 30 percent.

Apple booted Fortnite from its App Store last year after Epic dodged revenue sharing

with the iPhone maker.

- 'Not about money' - Under cross-examination, Cook sparred with Epic lawyer Gary Bornstein about the profitability of the App Store. Cook disputed Epic's contention that its profit margin on apps was some 80 percent, but financial details were not disclosed in court due to confidentiality concerns.

The Apple executive said the proprietary payments system challenged by Epic was about convenience for consumers, more than about profits.

"We always put the user at the center of everything we do," Cook said. "It has nothing to do with money."

During his testimony, Cook defended Apple's policy of barring apps directing consumers to other platforms to purchase subscriptions or credits for games and other services. "It would be akin to Best Buy advertising that you can go across the street to the Apple Store to buy an iPhone," he said. But District Court Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers, in a series of harsh questions for Cook at the end of his testimony, suggested that Apple's cut is too high even if reduced to 15 percent after the first year.

"It does appear to be disproportionate," the judge told Cook. "After that first interaction.. the developer is keeping those customers, Apple is just profiting from them." Cook retorted quickly, "I see it differently," and then added: "We are creating the entire amount of commerce on the store and we are doing that by getting the largest audience there."

Apple does not allow users of its popular devices to download apps from anywhere but its App Store, and developers have to use Apple's payment system, which takes its cut. The Epic lawyer also questioned Cook about Apple's arrangement with Google to be the default search engine for the iPhone maker's Safari browser, another area scrutinized by antitrust officials. Cook acknowledged that Google pays for this position but added that Apple made the arrangement "in the best interest of the user." The case in Oakland comes with Apple feeling pressure from a wide range of app makers over its control of the App Store, which critics say represents monopolistic behaviour.

The European Union has formally accused Apple of unfairly squeezing out music streaming rivals based on a complaint brought by Sweden-based Spotify and others, which claim the California group sets rules that favour its own Apple Music.

A recently formed Coalition for App Fairness, which includes both Spotify and Epic, have called for Apple to open up its marketplace, claiming its commission is a "tax" on rivals. Closing arguments in the bench trial in California were expected early next week, with the judge expected to rule within several weeks. —AFP

### WhatsApp chat history migration coming for users switching phone numbers

WhatsApp is working on feature which allows users to migrate their chat history when they change their phone numbers. According to WABetaInfo, which regularly publishes updates on WhatsApp's activities, a solution is in the works for cross platform support as well. "WhatsApp is working on a solution to migrate the chat history between iOS and Android, even with a different phone number, for a future update," it said. The feature which is under development fixes the "issue" where a user couldn't restore the chat history after buying a device that's not on the same operating system, said WABetaInfo. In fact, it's not possible to restore your chat history from iCloud on WhatsApp for Android, and WhatsApp for iOS cannot restore the backup from Google Drive, it

## Ahmad Awais – A Pakistani engineer who contributed to NASA's first helicopter flight on Mars

**ISLAMABAD:** A Pakistani engineer, Ahmad Awais, has received international recognition for his expert participation in humankind's first-ever attempt at controlled flight on the surface of another planet, Mars.

Last month, NASA's Ingenuity Mars Helicopter became the first aircraft in history to make a powered, controlled flight on another planet. The Ingenuity team at the agency's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California confirmed the flight succeeded after receiving data from the helicopter via NASA's Perseverance Mars rover.

Awais, who has so far not been appreciated by the government officials, has been recognized by the US Embassy in Islamabad.

"Pakistani developers are truly making their mark in the world. #DidYouKnow Ahmad Awais (@MrAhmadAwais), a Pakistani award-winning open-source engineer, contributed code to the software for the Mars 2020 helicopter mission, also known as NASA's Ingenuity Helicopter?" tweeted the embassy.

Meanwhile, Ahmad Awais has



thanked the embassy for appreciating his work. "I'm incredibly humbled that my teeny-tiny open-source contribution was part of humankind's first successful attempt at a powered, controlled flight of an aircraft on another planet," Ahmad Awais tweeted. The award-winning open source engineer, last month, announced his achievement on twitter. He wrote, "My Open Source Contribution to NASA's Ingenuity Helicopter Made it to Mars". "I mean, through open-source, I contributed code to the software of Mars 2020 Helicopter Mission — NASA's Ingenuity Helicopter. "I can't believe it. I'm here on Earth, but my code is on Mars. A small contribution but it means a whole lot to me, more than any of you can imagine," he added.

## Russia seeks good price for Soyuz space module

**MOSCOW:** Russia has put up for sale one of its space modules, which in 2018 returned a Russian and two Americans from the International Space Station (ISS). "Descent module No. 738 of the Soyuz MS-08 mission is available on the Glavkosmos web portal for purchase," read a statement issued late Tuesday by Glavkosmos, a subsidiary of Russia's Roscosmos space agency. "This lander can become an excellent exhibition showpiece for any public or private exhibition dedicated to aerospace," the statement added. Glavkosmos spokesman Yevgeny Kolomiyevev told AFP that the price of the descent module was not being publically disclosed because it was a "trade secret" and that prospective buyers would need to submit requests through the agency's website. The Soyuz MS-08 spacecraft in March 2018 sent cosmonaut Oleg Artemyev and NASA astronauts Andrew Feustel and Richard Arnold to the ISS.

In October the same year, its descent module, which is up for grabs, returned Artemyev, Faustale and Arnold to Earth landing in Kazakhstan. Glavkosmos director Dmitry Loskutov told the RIA Novosti news agency he did not rule out in the future selling "other shuttles, once their mission is completed". Moscow is seeking to boost its embattled space programme, which has stagnated since the collapse of the Soviet Union and has been facing stiff competition from US-based tech billionaire Elon Musk's company SpaceX. Russia said earlier this month it would send an actress and a director into space to make the first feature film in the cosmos and also deliver an eccentric Japanese billionaire to the ISS. —AFP

## UN body recognises Pakistan's 'Ignite' incubation center at WSIS Prizes 2021



International Telecommunication Union, a United Nations agency for digital tech, has announced Pakistan's National Incubation Centers 'Ignite' as one of the champion of projects of its environment category at World Summit on the Information Society Prizes 2021.

The news was announced by the Permanent Mission of Pakistan to UN, Geneva, on its official Twitter handling stating that the Pakistani govern-

ment's enabling policies for the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) have been recognised globally.

"As a global recognition of @GovtofPakistan's enabling policies for ICT development, today @ITU announced Pakistan's National Incubation Centers of @IgniteNTF @MoitOfficial as one of the champion projects of C6 Category (enabling environment) at @WSISprocess Prizes 2021,"

it tweeted. "Around 1300 projects were submitted by Govts and private sector for @WSIS-process Prizes 2021. 1.3 million stakeholders participated in the voting process," it added. The achievement of @IgniteNTF is manifestation of a robust ICT innovation value chain & industry in Pakistan, also holds promise for an inclusive and sustainable development in the country, the mission added. —The Business Report

## Pakistan's cadet college student is behind development of cellular networks

**ISLAMABAD** – The US Embassy in Islamabad has recognized a Pakistani-American engineer, Asad Ali Abidi, for his contribution to the development of wireless cellular networks.

Born in Peshawar on July 12, 1956, the electrical engineer currently serves as a tenured professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, and is the inaugural holder of the Abdus Salam Chair at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS).

Abidi received education till matriculation at Cadet College Hasan Abdal before heading to the UK where he completed his high school at Dudley College of Technology.

He gained his BSc degree in electrical engineering at Imperial College, London, in 1976 and completed PhD in 1981 under the supervision of Robert Meyer.

He is best known for pioneering RF CMOS technology during the late 1980s to early 1990s. The technology has enabled the development of wireless cellular networks.

As of 2008, the radio transceivers in all wireless networking devices and modern mobile phones are mass-produced as RF CMOS devices. As per the latest figures, mobile phone users in



Pakistan have been increased to 180 million while users of cellular network have risen to 100 million. "Asad Ali Abidi is a Pakistani-American engineer who graduated from Cadet College Hasan Abdal. He is a tenured professor at the University of California, LA. He

is best known for pioneering RF CMOS technology, which enabled the development of wireless cellular networks," the US Embassy said in a tweet. As the US official reminded people of Pakistan their unsung hero, social media users have expressed pride. —APP

## Microsoft announces retirement of Internet Explorer

Microsoft said that as of June 15, 2022 Internet Explorer will be retired and no longer be supported by the company



**SAN FRANCISCO:** Microsoft said it is retiring Internet Explorer, the browser it created more than 25 years and which is now largely abandoned as people instead use competitors like Google's Chrome or Apple's Safari.

"We are announcing that the future of Internet Explorer on Windows 10 is in Microsoft Edge," the company said in a blog post Wednesday, referring to its other browser. "Not only is Microsoft Edge a faster, more secure and more modern browsing experience than Internet Explorer, but it is also able to address a key concern: compatibility for older, legacy websites and applications," Microsoft said.

People ribbed Internet Explorer in tweets.

"RIP Internet Explorer, I never used it, but after it dies we can't make fun of it anymore," wrote someone with the handle Arcader UwU. "I still fondly remember how I used it to download Chrome on every new Windows system," said Hrishikesh Pardeshi.

"This browser might seem old and outdated nowadays, but back in the day, everyone needed it. RIP Internet Explorer 1995-2022," said

someone called TheCool\_ColdMan. Microsoft said that as of June 15, 2022 Internet Explorer will be retired and no longer be supported by the company. But Internet Explorer-based websites and applications will work with Edge at least until 2029, Microsoft said, because many organizations have websites based on the now-doomed browser. Chrome, Google's browser, controls 65 percent of the market, said Statscounter. Safari, created by Apple and available on Apple computers and devices, is second with nearly a 19 percent market share as of April of this year. Firefox and Edge are in third

and fourth place with 3.59 percent and 3.39 percent respectively.

### China says ByteDance, Baidu, Microsoft improperly collected user data

**BEIJING:** China's internet watchdog said on Friday that companies including ByteDance, Baidu and KuaiShou had improperly collected user data. China Cyberspace Administration also named American tech giant Microsoft and its two products Bing and LinkedIn in a statement. —Reuters

