

India may probe complaint against Apple: official

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An Indian woman talks on her mobile phone as she walks past the logo of the iPhone 4 during its launch by provider Aircel in Hyderabad in May 2011. India may investigate a complaint against Apple after allegations the U.S. computer giant violated local competition laws, an antitrust agency official told Dow Jones Newswires Wednesday.

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The official, who spoke to [Dow Jones](#) on condition of anonymity, said the complainant alleged [Apple](#) had broken Indian law by selling its [iPhone 4](#) model through just two local mobile phone operators, Bharti Airtel and Aircel.

"We may examine the complaint to see if it (Apple) is violating any law," the official at the Competition Commission said, declining to provide any further details about the complaint.

India's 2002 Competition Act bars any deals that are "likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India."

An Apple India spokesperson told AFP the company had "not received any notification from the Competition Commission" and declined to comment further.

"The first test of whether Apple violates the Competition Act will essentially be if it adversely affects public interest," Akil Hirani, a managing partner at law firm Majmudar & Co., told Dow Jones.

If the company was found to have breached local laws, the Competition Commission could pressure it to widen its distribution network to include more mobile phone operators, he said.

Gaurang Kanth, a managing partner at legal firm Kanth & Associates, told Dow Jones the authorities could also force Apple to break its existing contracts with Airtel and Aircel, and bar it from setting up similar exclusive deals in the future.

The popular [iPhone](#) 4 made its debut in India last month amid growing demand for smartphones in the country.

India, which boasts the world's fastest-growing mobile market, has more than 800 million cellular subscribers, with the sales of smartphones expected to hit nearly 12 million in 2011, according to CyberMedia Research.

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