

## Apple likely to release foldable iPhone as early as 2026 — report

APPLE is likely to introduce its foldable iPhone as early as 2026, the Information reported on Tuesday, that could mark the biggest hardware design revamp for the company's most popular product.

The Cupertino, California-based company's plan to release a foldable iPhone could mimic a similar move by Samsung Electronics, which pioneered the foldable segment in 2019 in a bid to attract new customers with a major hardware design refresh.

Apple's foldable iPhone has progressed from the ideation stage, the report said, citing two people with knowledge of the matter.

The company has reached out to suppliers in Asia to make components for the device, the Information reported, adding that iPhone maker has created an internal codename V68 for the product.

Foldable smartphones, powered with artificial intelli-

gence features, are expected to trigger demand for the iPhone maker, which faces stiff competition from Honor and Huawei in China and Samsung globally.

Samsung unveiled its latest foldable smartphones earlier in July, making its priciest flagship model lighter and slimmer with new AI functions.

Global foldable smartphone market grew 49% in the first quarter from a year earlier, marking its highest rate of increase in six quarters, according to a Counterpoint Research report from May, with Huawei taking the top spot for the first time, beating Samsung.

Apple also plans to bring an upgrade to a camera of at least one iPhone model, that would let its users to control the size of the aperture with a mechanical system, possibly allowing users to create depth-of-field effect, the Information report added. — **Reuters**

# LVMH sales growth slows in Q2 as Chinese market stalls

PARIS — LVMH sales growth slowed in the second quarter (Q2) as Chinese shoppers reined in spending on high-end fashion at home, even as demand in Western markets slightly picked up.

Sales at the world's biggest luxury group and owner of labels Louis Vuitton, Tiffany & Co. and Hennessy, grew to 20.98 billion euros (\$22.8 billion), a 1% rise on an organic basis, which strips out currency effects and acquisitions.

That compares to a 3% rise year on year in the first quarter, and double-digit growth in 2023 when consumers in key market China splurged on luxury goods as they emerged from pandemic lockdowns.

The report from sector bellwether LVMH, which is Europe's second-largest listed company, worth around 340 billion euros,

follows profit warnings from smaller labels Burberry and Hugo Boss last week.

Though LVMH sales under-shot expectations for revenues of 21.6 billion euros, according to an LSEG poll based on six analysts, it was seen as largely priced in.

"All in all, this shouldn't be an insurmountable problem, given the minimal size of the miss and the significant pullback the LVMH share price has suffered since the initial post 4Q23 reporting euphoria," said Luca Solca, analyst at Bernstein.

LVMH shares have been volatile since the luxury slowdown emerged, and are down about 20% over the past year, amid worries that middle-class shoppers in the world's No. 2 economy are pulling back on purchases due to a property slump and job insecurity.

LVMH offered "no nasty surprises," said Piral Dadhanian, RBC analyst.

Its sales in Asia, excluding the Japanese market, fell by 14% in the second quarter, worsening from a 6% drop in the first quarter.

Sales in Japan, where tourists are taking advantage of the weak yen, continued to grow.

LVMH Chief Finance Officer Jean-Jacques Guiony said that it was difficult to provide an outlook on the Chinese market, but added that "the Chinese customer is holding up quite well."

"We still see a lot of China travelers, particularly into Japan, which says something about the appetite of mainlanders for our brands, which shows no sign of fading away," Mr. Guiony told analysts on a call.

Business with US and European customers is "slightly better," he added.

The surge in sales in Japan is, however, exerting significant pressure on margins, he added, with lower costs and prices compared to China.

Operating profit for the first half was 10.65 billion euros, with an operating margin of 25.6%, down from 27.4% a year ago.

That compared to expectations for 11.11 billion euros and a 26.2% margin, according to consensus provider Visible Alpha.

The group's fashion and leather goods division, which includes the Louis Vuitton and Christian Dior brands and accounts for nearly half of group sales and the bulk of operating profit, grew 1%, slowing slightly from the previous quarter's 2% rise. — **Reuters**

## Tesla's 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter profit margins worst in 5 years as price cuts, incentives weigh

TESLA on Tuesday reported its lowest profit margin in more than five years and missed Wall Street earnings targets in the second quarter, as the electric vehicle (EV) maker cut prices to revive demand while it increased spending on artificial intelligence projects.

The company said it was on track to produce new vehicles, including more affordable models, in the first half of 2025, although the models will result in achieving less cost reduction than previously expected. Shares fell 8% in after-hours trade.

"Perhaps more than ever in the company's recent history, Tesla's investors need results; those will have to come fast — both for the humanoid robot and for the Robotaxi," said Thomas Monteiro, senior analyst at *Investing.com*.

The second quarter was tumultuous, with Chief Executive

Officer Elon Musk shelving development of an all-new cheaper car in favor of less ambitious lower-cost models and working on creating self-driving taxis, helping to boost shares.

The company also laid off more than 10% of its employees to cut costs, and Tesla said profit was also weighed down by restructuring charges and an increase in operating expenses largely driven by artificial intelligence projects.

Tesla recorded automotive gross margin excluding regulatory credits of 14.6% in the second quarter, compared with estimates of 16.29%, according to 20 analysts polled by Visible Alpha.

Dan Coatsworth, investment analyst at AJ Bell, said Tesla has now missed earnings targets for four quarters in a row. "There is a lot of talk about robotaxis, humanoid robots and autonomous driving,

which provides an exciting narrative for investors but doesn't get over the fact that these are tomorrow's potential riches, not today's."

Mr. Musk told analysts on a conference call that new competitors "have discounted their EVs very substantially, which has made it a bit more difficult for Tesla."

The company's electric vehicle deliveries have fallen for two consecutive quarters as the automaker battles rising competition and slow demand stemming from a lack of affordable new models. Tesla's sales of China-made EVs, which are also exported to Europe and elsewhere, slumped in the second quarter from a year earlier, whereas BYD Co. and other Chinese automakers posted strong sales growth.

Tesla said on Tuesday it expected a sequential increase in production in the third quarter.

The company reported revenue of \$25.50 billion for the quarter, slightly ahead of last year and analyst targets, according to LSEG data.

Tesla's sales of regulatory credits nearly tripled to a record \$890 million in the second quarter from a year earlier. Traditional automakers buy credits from Tesla to meet clean-vehicle production regulatory targets.

Net income was \$1.48 billion in the second quarter, compared with \$2.70 billion a year ago, with adjusted earnings of 52 cents per share missing the Wall Street consensus of 62 cents, as calculated by LSEG.

### ROBOTAXIS

Shares of Tesla have surged more than 30% since June 13, when shareholders voted to approve

Mr. Musk's \$56-billion pay package that was invalidated by a Delaware court in January. Its shares were also boosted by hopes for robotaxis.

Mr. Musk over the years has promoted Tesla as a technology company, most recently saying self-driving technology was key. Predictions of that technology maturing have been missed for years, but on Tuesday he forecast self-driving software would be able to drive Tesla vehicles without human supervision next year, saying he would be shocked if that were not the case.

Tesla said on Tuesday the "timing of Robotaxi deployment depends on technological advancement and regulatory approval." But Mr. Musk said during the conference call, "I don't think regulatory approval will be a limiting factor."

He also said Tesla was likely to win regulatory approval for its "supervised" Full Self-Driving software, which requires driver attention, in China and Europe by the end of this year.

Mr. Musk said Tesla has delayed the unveiling of its Robotaxi product to Oct. 10 from Aug. 8 to make some important changes to the robotaxi.

He had announced the Aug. 8 unveiling date after Reuters reported that Tesla had pivoted to self-driving taxis after shelving plans to develop a long-promised all-new cheaper car expected to be priced at around \$25,000.

"Elon is great at dangling the carrot in front of investors, but new ideas tend to be long on vision, but short on execution," said David Wagner, head of equity and portfolio manager at Tesla investor Aptus Capital Advisors. — **Reuters**

## Loss and Damage Fund hosting to benefit PHL coastal dwellers

THE DEPARTMENT of Environment and Natural Resources said the Philippine hosting of the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF) board could ultimately produce dividends in the form of limiting the climate damage to Philippine coastal communities.

Environment Minister Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said that the fund would have a front-row seat to the action in the disaster-prone Philippines and decide to support disaster mitigation measures.

"For us in the Philippines, many coastal communities will also be affected and continue to be affected now by combination of sea level rise, tidal impacts, and of course, the way they use the land around where they live...they will need to be relocated eventually," she said on the sidelines of a post-SONA briefing.

The Philippines was selected to host the LDF board, beating out seven other countries.

Last year, developed countries, mainly responsible for most of the world's carbon emissions, pledged about \$700 million towards the LDF.

Ms. Yulo-Loyzaga added that the initial pledges would be used to get the LDF up and running.

"The contributions themselves are yet to come," she said.

Citing the United Nations, she said that the LDF would need about \$200 to \$300 billion annually until 2030.

"So this is a large number. We know that these are ambitious goals, but we need to strive to actually reach them," she said. "Hopefully, the board will provide that platform for us to actually approximate what the real needs are... in order for us to address loss and damage," she added.

The LDF is tasked with assisting developing countries that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change.

In his State of the Nation Address (SONA) Monday, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. urged Congress to pass an enabling law facilitating the Philippines' participation in the LDF board.

Ms. Yulo-Loyzaga said that the Philippines will set up a secretariat and provide technical staff and facilities.

"That has been budgeted for, and we just have to tap the budget once the ratification of the privileges and immunities are given to the board through the Senate and Congress," she added. — **Adrian H. Halili**

## Business registrations up 6% in first half

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry (DTI) said business name registrations rose 6% to 679,118 in the first half, with rapid growth noted in e-commerce enterprises.

Digital PH Group Undersecretary Mary Jean T. Pacheco said momentum was carrying over from a record performance in 2023.

"We had a banner year last year when we got the highest number of registrations of close to 984,330 business names, and the good news is that the momentum continues," Ms. Pacheco said at a briefing recently.

She added that online businesses accounted for 17,000 of the total registrations during the half, nearly equaling their full-year total of 18,000 in 2023.

The DTI also attributed the growth in registrations to traditional businesses like *sari-sari* stores, as well as a strong performance by the Calabarzon region.

"This remarkable growth in business name registrations... signals a growing economy, increased

job opportunities, and a brighter future for the Philippines. The DTI continues to encourage aspiring entrepreneurs to take advantage of the opportunities available and contribute to the nation's economic growth," she added.

Ms. Pacheco said the DTI is encouraging online micro-entrepreneurs to register as *barangay* business enterprises (BMBEs) to gain exemption from the Bureau of Internal Revenue's Revenue Regulations No. 16-2023.

The DTI said that the regulations require electronic marketplaces and digital financial service providers to withhold an income tax of 1% on half of the gross remittances to online sellers.

However, BMBEs and those with gross remittances of less than P500,000 a year are exempt from withholding, it added.

"We want to ensure that online micro-entrepreneurs are aware of the valuable benefits that BMBE registration offers," Trade Secretary Alfredo E. Pascual said. — **Justine Irish D. Tabile**

## SM Bicutan Tower: A vibrant office and retail hub in Southern Metro Manila

Within the upbeat environment of Southern Metro Manila, SM Bicutan Tower is making its mark as a prominent addition to the broader SM Bicutan Complex in Parañaque City, seamlessly integrating functional office spaces with retail establishments that enhance the area's appeal for both residents and businesses.

SM Bicutan Tower spans close to 20,000 square meters with seven dedicated office floors, three retail floors, and four parking levels. The layout caters to a diverse range of needs, from corporate offices to retail outlets. Industries such as logistics, business process outsourcing (BPO), and traditional office-based businesses are particularly well-suited to thrive within the dynamic environment of SM Bicutan Tower.

### STRATEGIC LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

The Complex is centrally located, making it an ideal hub for businesses aiming to optimize operations and expand their reach within Metro Manila and beyond. This prime location offers excellent opportunities for businesses and professionals, positioned to leverage the untapped potential between nearby central business districts. The tower is within a 30-minute drive from Makati City, Bonifacio Global City (BGC) in Taguig City, Alabang in Muntinlupa City, and the Bay Area in Pasay City.

One of the key advantages of SM Bicutan Tower is its close proximity to Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), making it an attractive location for businesses with international connections and frequent travelers. The Complex also enjoys seamless accessibility through major roads such as the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX), Doña Soledad Avenue, the Bicutan Interchange, and the Metro Manila Skyway.

The vicinity also boasts proximity to educational institutions such as Informatics Computer College, Asian Institute of Computer Studies (AICS), Don Bosco Center of Studies, and Immaculate Heart of Mary College. It is also near hospitals and medical centers like Parañaque Doctors' Hospital, South Superhighway Medical Center, Ospital ng Parañaque, and Bicutan Medical Center.



The SM Bicutan Tower offers versatile spaces with office floors, retail areas, and convenient parking for businesses to flourish



SM Bicutan's flexible floor plans make it ideal for a wide range of office operations such as logistics, business process outsourcing, and traditional offices.

### BEYOND WORK: A THRIVING COMMUNITY

Bicutan itself is characterized by a flourishing residential landscape, from high-rise condominiums to gated subdivisions including SMDC Spring Residences, Sun Valley, Better Living, and Marcelo Village. SM Bicutan Tower can be conveniently accessed from these communities through various transportation options, including jeepneys, buses, FX, vans, taxis, and private cars.

Adding to the conveniences is its interconnection with the SM City Bicutan mall, catering to basic and recreational needs with a wide array of dining, shopping options, and a relaxation area with an open-air garden.

The diverse developments around SM Bicutan Tower cater to various lifestyles and preferences, making it a sought-after area for residents and businesses seeking urban convenience with a touch of

suburban tranquility. "The office is that one venue that contends with the home as the place where a person spends most of his or her waking hours. So that office better be a conducive place to stay in," said Alexis Ortiga, SM Offices Business Unit Head.

The development of SM Bicutan Tower is also expected to significantly impact the local economy. The projected influx of businesses and job opportunities is set to generate increased foot traffic in the surrounding retail establishments, benefiting local merchants and boosting commercial activity in the area.

"Our network of sustainable workspaces is nationwide, so that we are conveniently closer to the homes of our tenant-partners' employees. This keeps families closer together, while answering companies' needs for hubs of growth, innovation, and workplace synergy," Mr. Ortiga said.