

Picking a portable tablet

Don't want to wait for the new Nexus 7? There are plenty of new Android tablets in this segment already in the market

By GOPAL SATHI
gopal.sathin@mhl.com

The Nexus 7 (2013) announced last week by Google sounds, on paper, like a great new tablet in the competitive 7-inch segment. For now however, it is not available in India. The company has committed to bringing its hardware here more quickly in the future—the first Nexus came to India only recently, almost a year after being launched.

The new Nexus 7 is also a little more expensive than the original version, and the \$30 (around ₹1,700) price increase is definitely going to affect prices here too. The 16 GB variant of the new Nexus 7 is priced at \$229 in the US, while the original Nexus 7 (priced at \$199 in the US) was priced ₹15,999 here. That definitely suggests that the new Nexus 7 will be a lot closer in price to the iPad Mini, which is available for ₹21,900.

The new tablet will support features such as wireless charging, and will come with a more powerful quad-core 1.5 GHz CPU, with 2 GB RAM. Early reviews have been full of praise, and note that the performance and build quality are both excellent.

The display resolution has also been raised to full HD, but the 7-inch screen size has been retained; many new tablets in the segment are now coming in 8-inch models, which offer a wider screen when seen in portrait mode.

The new Nexus 7 will also come with Android 4.3 loaded—this is definitely an advantage over tablets from other brands, because Android version updates still happen only slowly, and the new version brings a lot of interesting changes. One of the new features is the ability to create restricted profiles—for children, or guests, so they can access only the apps you want them to. So you could have one profile for your children, where they can play games, but not use the browser, for example. The new version also supposedly improves gaming performance and security.

Since the price and the launch date for India aren't known yet, some people might not want to wait for the Nexus 7. If you're one of them, here are some alternatives:

Google Nexus 7

We'd normally not mention an older device, but the new Nexus 7 has caused some sellers on Amazon to drop prices on the original Nexus 7. The build quality of the Nexus 7 and the hardware powering the device were among the best last year, and it still blows away competition at the same price. Just check the cost though—some sellers are still charging full price, which isn't worth it with the new version around the corner.

Specifications
CPU: 1.2 GHz quad core
RAM: 1 GB
Storage: 16 GB
Screen size: 7 inches
Resolution: 1280x800
Battery: 4,325 mAh
Price: ₹11,999



Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 T310

The Samsung Galaxy Tab 3 T310 is a cheaper take on the 8-inch Galaxy Note, and has many of Samsung's now standard software features. It's a pretty good option, but for now, it's also the most expensive one.

Specifications
CPU: 1.5 GHz dual core
RAM: 1.5 GB
Storage: 16 GB
Screen size: 8 inches
Resolution: 1280x720
Battery: 4,450 mAh
Price: ₹21,495



Simtronics Xpad Mini

Simtronics is probably better known for things like pen drives but the company has been manufacturing tablets locally for some time now, and has been steadily improving the build quality as well. The latest Simtronics Xpad Mini is more than a little derivative in its looks, but the performance is good and the price is great though it is not as powerful as Samsung's device.

Specifications
CPU: 1 GHz quad core
RAM: 1 GB
Storage: 8 GB
Screen size: 7.85 inches
Resolution: 1,024x768
Battery: 4,000 mAh
Price: ₹11,999