

Google says no India launch for radar-enabled Pixel 4 smartphone

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Google has touted Motion Sense as a key feature of its new Pixel 4 smartphones

Google will not launch its newest Pixel 4 smartphone in India, the company has said, disappointing consumers with a decision reportedly based on its refusal to disable a feature that uses a radar frequency barred in the South Asian nation.

Hours after the Alphabet-owned internet giant unveiled its latest handsets featuring motion-sensing capabilities and a ramped-up camera, the firm told an Indian Twitter user the phone would not be sold in the country.

"We decided not to make Pixel 4 available in India," Google tweeted late Tuesday from an official company account, without giving a reason for the decision.

"We remain committed to our current Pixel 3a phones and look forward to bringing future Pixel and other hardware products to India."

The move sparked speculation that the new phone's motion-sensing radar technology called "Soli"—which operates on a frequency not allowed for civilian use in India—was responsible for the decision.

Google has touted "Motion Sense" as a key feature of the Pixel 4, which will allow users to skip songs, turn off alarms, and silence phone calls simply by waving their hands.

Google's Brian Rakowski said in a statement that the feature is enabled in all the markets where the Pixel 4 will be sold, "except in Japan where it's coming soon".

The statement did not say why the function will not be enabled at launch in Japan.

Japan's Kyodo news agency reported that Motion Sense will not be available in the country "until next spring".

No such indication was given for the Indian market, fuelling frustration among Pixel fans in the country.

Google would have to get approval to enable the radar-based function in every country where it wants to sell the Pixel 4, according to the technology website The Verge.

"Have every Google 'made' device since Nexus one. But sadly this is the year to move away from the @madebygoogle brand, guess why? @GoogleIndia does not want the Pixel 4 coming to India. Why Google, why?" tweeted developer Dhimil Gosalia.

Another user Chitra Poornima tweeted a weeping emoji, writing: "Pixel 4 not launching in India i was so eagerly waiting for it."

But telecom analysts said Google's decision was understandable given Indian consumers' overwhelming preference for lower-priced smartphones over premium brands.

"Neither Google nor Apple feature among the top five [phone](#) brands in India," Baburajan K, editor of TelecomLead.com, told AFP.

"The Indian smartphone market is dominated by Chinese players... with people generally buying phones for less than 15,000 rupees (\$210)," he added—less than a third of the \$799 starting price for the Pixel 4 in the United States.

"Google already has a presence here through its Android operating system, so it doesn't make huge sense for them to make a big effort just to launch their phones here."

According to the Economic Times newspaper, Google's Pixel 3 only sold about 80,000 units in the country of 1.3 billion.

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