

# CENTRE'S PUSH FOR NAVIC SYSTEM LANDS SMARTPHONE GIANTS ON UNKNOWN ROAD

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The Union government is pushing tech giants to make smartphones compatible with its home-grown navigation system within months, worrying the likes of Samsung, Xiaomi and Apple who fear elevated costs and disruptions as the move requires hardware changes, according to two industry sources and government documents seen by *Reuters*.

In line with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's drive for self-reliance, India has over the years expanded the use of its regional navigation satellite system called NavIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation). The Union government wants to reduce dependence on foreign systems, including the widely used U.S. Global Positioning System (GPS), and says NavIC provides more accurate domestic navigation and that its use would benefit the economy.

China, the European Union, Japan and Russia have their own global or regional navigation systems to rival GPS. Operational since 2018, NavIC's uptake is minimal; it is mandated in public vehicle location trackers, for example.

But government and industry documents show Mr. Modi's administration and space officials want to broaden its use.

They have this year pushed smartphone giants to make hardware changes to support NavIC, in addition to GPS, in new phones they will sell from January 2023. The changes would also require more testing clearances, which with a January 1 deadline would disrupt businesses and planned launches, according to two smartphone industry sources and documents.

Samsung declined to comment on the meetings.

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