

After Backlash, India's Government Retracts a Plan to Monitor Citizens' Social Media Activities | Business Insider India

By Dilsher Dhillon

August 6, 2018

In April 2018, India's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting released a tender that indicated its intentions to establish a "New Media Command Room" and build a technology platform to expand its social media operations. The deadline for the submission of bids was in August.

Some of the key activities of this media command centre, which was to comprise 20 social media professionals, included trawling of websites like Facebook and Instagram, the collection of individuals' data and messages and their subsequent profiling.

[...]

In mid-July, the Supreme Court said that the monitoring of people's social media activities would make India a "surveillance state". The notice came in response to a petition filed against the proposal by Mahua Moitra, an official from the Trinamool Congress party, who claimed that the proposal went against the fundamental right to privacy.

The notice had its intended impact. A few days ago, the Indian government did an about-turn on the social media strategy, deciding that it was wise to avoid skirting controversy in the build-up to national elections next year. On 3 August, the central government told the Supreme Court that it was withdrawing the proposal. However, it did say that it could review the scheme and come up with a modified proposal.

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