

Facebook convinced poll panel to settle on a voluntary code | Hindustan Times

By Venkat Ananth and Deeksha Bhardwaj

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In the run-up to the 2019 general elections, internal Facebook documents say it managed to convince the Election Commission of India (ECI) to scuttle its original intention of introducing stiff social media regulations and settle for a voluntary code of ethics, avoiding additional legal obligations.

The social media company fronted the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) to push its view and achieve consensus over the rules, Facebook's internal documents spirited out of the company by whistleblower Frances Haugen show.

The ECI, the documents show and former government officials independently confirmed, wanted a strict social media regulatory framework, perhaps not a fresh legislation (or an amendment to an existing one) in time for the elections.

The EC spokesperson said that it wasn't familiar with Facebook's internal report, but the claim doesn't seem to be correct. "Political advertisement on electronic media including social media is always prohibited during the silence period. Section 126(1)(b) of R.P. Act 1951 prohibits display of any election matter (including political advertisement) by means of television or similar apparatus (electronic media) during the period of 48 hours ending with the hour fixed for conclusion of poll," the EC spokesperson told HT and The Intersection.

[...]

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