

How WhatsApp became a tool for Indian police to fight harassment | Rest of World

By Mahima Jain

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Last year, a 22-year-old college student in Hyderabad, India, approached one of his female classmates and asked if she'd be his friend. She agreed, but then he pushed a bit further and asked her to be his girlfriend, to which she gave him a firm "no." Upset with her refusal, the student began a campaign of harassment. Over the next few weeks, he called and sent her abusive text messages, threatening to spread false information about her.

Following the harassment, the police in Hyderabad had not only apprehended the young man — [a rarity](#) when it comes to such cases in India — but sent him to a counselor for a dressing down. On a humid day in March, in a nondescript building in Hyderabad's IT hub, Miryala Lavanya, a clinical psychologist hired by the state's police force, adjusted her sari and wiped the sweat off her brow, as a ceiling fan slowly rotated above her.

[...]

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