

The limits of Modi's power to control Twitter | Rest of World

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The Indian government has said that Twitter could lose its “safe harbor” protections — the rules that designate it an intermediary, rather than a publisher — and make it responsible for all of the content that appears on the platform. Writing on Twitter, Ravi Shankar Prasad, the minister of communications, electronics and information technology, accused the company of “deliberately [choosing] the path of noncompliance” with new rules governing social media in the country.

The move is the latest in a series of attacks on Twitter by the government of Narendra Modi, culminating in a widely covered police raid on the company's offices in May. However, legal experts told *Rest of World* that the latest threat is essentially hollow, and that it is the courts, not the government, that have the power to decide whether or not Twitter should keep its safe harbor provisions.

“I would like to clearly state: the IT Act, IT Rules do not contain any power for the process for grant[ing] or revocation of an ‘intermediary status’,” said Apar Gupta, executive director of the Internet Freedom Foundation.

[...]

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