

With threats and trolls, organizing online Covid-19 relief in India gets complicated | Rest of World

By Nilesh Christopher

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Last week, digital activist Saket Gokhale started to get frantic calls from volunteers working to organize online Covid-19 relief. As death rates peaked to over 3,000 a day, hundreds of volunteers across the country created online resources for coronavirus patients looking for supplies like oxygen or ICU beds. But the volunteers calling Gokhale were calling about something else: they were getting threatening calls from the Delhi police.

On the calls, volunteers were told to stop posting SOS messages and unverified leads on supplies for fear their messages could lead to charges of black market trading or spreading false information. Gokhale did some research and traced some of the numbers of the callers threatening volunteers back to the digital wing of India's ruling party, the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). "I realized a lot of these were people from a certain political party going after any narrative that would make the government look bad," said the Mumbai-based activist. "They are on overdrive with perception management."

Source: [With threats and trolls, organizing online Covid-19 relief in India gets complicated](#)