



India's covid contact tracing app turned into "sophisticated surveillance system"

Description

INDIA: Now that the Wuhan coronavirus (Covid-19) *scamdemic* is over, India is attempting to repurpose its contract tracing app as a new mass surveillance, tracking and spying tool.

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology originally developed Aarogya Setu, as the app is called, in 2020 at the onset of the Fauci Flu *plandemic*. Government officials promised the Indian people at that time that it was just a "temporary solution to a temporary problem," the implication being that the app would eventually be deactivated and eliminated altogether. (Related: Remember when Apple and Google falsely promised the very same thing?)

While it might be true that Aarogya Setu will no longer be used to "contact trace" Indian people believed or suspected to have the Fauci Flu, it will now be used for generalized tyranny to control the Indian public – and all under the guise of "health care."

The latest marketing push for Aarogya Setu dubs it as a convenience tool for Indians to book doctor appointments, for instance. Indian officials say it will become the country's sole app for all things related to health care, which has many privacy advocates concerned.

"It stores location data and requires constant access to the users' Bluetooth, with the app justifying its invasive measure as essential to letting people know if they've been near a person infected with the COVID-19," writes Natalie Winters of *The National Pulse* about the new Aarogya Setu app.

"The app then allows for authorities to upload the gathered information to a government-owned and operated 'server,' which 'provides data to persons carrying out medical and administrative interventions necessary in relation to Covid-19.'"

Indian government quietly ads clause to app washing its hands of all liability for data breaches

Unfortunately for the Indian people, Aarogya Setu is *mandatory* for millions of them. Officials

announced that both government and private employees will need to download it, while some municipalities such as Noida have made the app mandatory for all residents.

Those who refuse the app are subject to jail time of up to six months. And perhaps the worst part is that the Indian government maintains no liability whatsoever should users' privacy be breached, which is likely to happen.

The Terms and Conditions for the app contain a nondescript clause that users must agree to, acknowledging "that the Government of India will not be liable for ... any unauthorised access to your information or modification thereof."

"The Aarogya Setu app is a sophisticated surveillance system, outsourced to a pvt (private) operator, with no institutional oversight – raising serious data security & privacy concerns," tweeted Rahul Gandhi, the leader of India's Congress party, as a warning.

"Technology can help keep us safe; but fear must not be leveraged to track citizens without their consent."

The Software Freedom Law Centre also called out the Arogya Setu app for invading people's privacy, stating that the government of India will now be free to share any data collected by it with "practically anyone it wants."

MIT Technology Review also awarded the app one out of five stars in an assessment of its privacy implications, citing data storage concerns and the collection of unnecessary information.

The Indian government claims the app's source code is public and that people should not worry, but independent technology experts say the app's server-side code has not yet been publicly released.

It is also said that the Indian government is repurposing its covid injection website, CoWIN, as a new portal to promote the country's universal immunization program.

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