

India gets tough with BlackBerry, Skype: report

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BlackBerry Pearl 3G. India has given Internet telephony pioneer Skype and the makers of BlackBerry handsets a deadline to fall into line with strict security-monitoring regulations or be blocked, a report said

India has given Internet telephony pioneer Skype and the makers of BlackBerry handsets a deadline to fall into line with strict security-monitoring regulations or be blocked, a report said Thursday.

India's intelligence officials have long complained that they are unable to

decipher [encrypted data](#) sent on Blackberry handsets, made by Canadian firm [Research In Motion](#), or intercept calls on [Skype](#).

The government has threatened to ban or block BlackBerry and Skype services if the companies fail to adhere to a 15-day deadline to make data available in formats that can be monitored, The Economic Times newspaper said.

[Google](#) has been asked to ensure emails on its Gmail service can be deciphered, though no deadline has been issued, the paper said.

"The latest development indicates that security agencies are again finding it difficult to intercept or decipher messages sent through BlackBerry phones," the paper said.

The Indian telecommunications ministry was unable to comment when contacted by AFP.

India, which faces a strengthening home-grown Maoist insurgency and constant threats from Islamist groups, is highly sensitive about the potential risks of technology.

The government has been restricting imports from Chinese telecom equipment manufacturers because of Indian intelligence agency fears that "spyware" could be embedded in the equipment.

It has also restricted the use of mobile phones in violence-wracked Indian Kashmir, where pay-as-you-go phones and the use of text messages have been curtailed. The area is a hotbed of anti-India activity.

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