

# India bans another 43 Chinese mobile apps

STEPHANIE FINDLAY — NEW DELHI

India has banned another 43 Chinese mobile apps, including Alibaba's online shopping site AliExpress, as the campaign against its neighbour's tech companies shows no sign of abating.

India's Electronics and Information Technology ministry said in an order yesterday that the apps had been blocked for "engaging in activities which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India".

Narendra Modi's government has banned more than 200 apps since relations between the countries deteriorated in June, after a border clash claimed the lives of 21 Indian soldiers.

S. Jaishankar, India's foreign minister, has called the stand-off the "most serious crisis" in relations since 1962.

The bans, described as a "digital strike" by the country's technology minister, have hit large Chinese tech companies including Alibaba, Tencent and

ByteDance, which were all investing in the Indian market.

Alibaba has invested in the Indian payments company Paytm and food delivery start-up Zomato, while Tencent has backed the education app Byju's and fantasy sports platform Dream11.

Chinese investment has slowed since New Delhi required all new investments to be vetted by the government in order to block "opportunistic takeovers".

Indian companies have sought to

capitalise on the nationalist anger against Beijing as consumers spurn Chinese apps in favour of homegrown versions. Indian start-ups Roposo, Chingari and Mitron are all trying to step in and fill the void left by the ban on TikTok.

But they still lag behind Snack Video, owned by the China's Kuaishou, which had racked up a total of 166m downloads, according to Sensor Tower data, until it was banned yesterday.

After 59 apps were banned in June, the companies were asked to answer a list of more than 50 questions from New Delhi. But there has not been any indication of when the apps will be cleared.

*PUBG Mobile*, the hit game that was initially distributed by Tencent Games in India, is working to re-enter the country after being banned this year. PUBG Corporation, a subsidiary of South Korean company Bluehole, said in a September statement that it would "take on all publishing responsibilities within the country" from Tencent.



AliExpress is among apps affected by tension between the countries