China orders takedown of 25 apps from ride service Didi

10 July 2021

In this April 27, 2017 file photo, visitors walk past a sign for Chinese ride-hailing service Didi Chuxing at the Global Mobile Internet Conference (GMIC) in Beijing. Chinese regulators have clamped down on the country's largest ride-hailing app, Didi Global Inc., days after its shares began trading in New York. Authorities told Didi to stop new registrations and ordered its app removed from China's app stores pending a cybersecurity review. Credit: AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein, File

China's regulator ordered the removal from app stores of 25 apps owned by Didi Global Inc., the country's largest ride-hailing service, citing severe violations of rules against collecting personal data.

The Cyberspace Administration of China had already taken down the main Didi app last Sunday, pending a cybersecurity review, after it debuted on the U.S. stock market last week.

The 25 additional apps include Didi Enterprises, as well as ones designed for Didi drivers.

A spokesperson for Didi did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The move comes after Chinese authorities said earlier this week they would step up supervision of companies listed overseas. Under the new measures, regulation of data security and cross-border data flows, as well as the management of confidential data, will be improved.

Didi is the latest company facing the scrutiny from the Chinese government. An investigation found "serious violations" in how Didi collected and used personal information, the internet regulator said earlier in the week. A statement said the company was told to "rectify problems" but gave no details.

The internet regulator also said Didi was barred from accepting new customers until the investigations were completed.

Didi was founded in 2012 as a taxi-hailing app and has expanded into other ride-hailing options including private cars and buses. It says it also is investing in electric cars, artificial intelligence and other technology development.

Didi raised $4 billion from investors in its New York stock offering.

The ruling Communist Party began tightening control over China's fast-changing internet industries last year, launching anti-monopoly and other investigations. Earlier this year, authorities fined Alibaba a record $2.8 billion over antitrust violations and launched an investigation into food delivery platform Meituan over suspected monopolistic behavior.

On Saturday, China's market regulator blocked Tencent-backed videogame live-streaming platforms Huya and Douyu from merging following an anti-monopoly investigation.