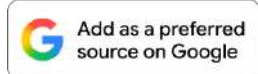


Manipur extends Internet ban across 5 districts till April 18

News Desk

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File photo: ANI

Imphal: The Manipur government has once again extended the suspension of mobile internet and data services across five districts in the Imphal valley, citing ongoing concerns over law and order. The restriction will remain in place for another two days, until April 18.

Internet suspension extended

Officials stated that the continued suspension of mobile internet, data services and broadband access was necessary to curb the spread of misinformation and rumours on social media platforms.

The restrictions were first imposed for three days on April 7, shortly after a deadly bomb attack in Bishnupur district. The incident, reportedly carried out by suspected Kuki militants, resulted in the deaths of two children and left their mother injured.

Repeated extensions since April 7

Since the initial shutdown, authorities have extended the restrictions in phases, usually for two days at a time. The affected districts include Imphal West, Imphal East, Thoubal, Kakching and Bishnupur.

Government cites law and order concerns

According to a notification issued by Commissioner-cum-Secretary (Home) N Ashok Kumar, the decision to continue the suspension followed a review of the prevailing situation in the valley districts.

The notification said that the state government considers it necessary to keep mobile internet, data services and VPN access suspended. It cited the lack of effective technical mechanisms to regulate mobile data usage as a key concern.

Authorities also highlighted the risk of social media platforms being misused to spread false information.

“The spread of disinformation and false rumours, and the sending of bulk SMS messages, can facilitate the mobilisation of mobs of agitators and demonstrators. This may lead to loss of life and damage to public and private property through arson, vandalism, and other violent activities, for which the control mechanism is still poor,” the notification said.

It also warned that any violation of the order would invite legal action.

Curfew relaxations announced

In separate notifications, District Magistrates in the five affected districts announced limited relaxation of curfew restrictions under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023.

Curfew has been relaxed daily from 5 am to 5 pm to allow residents to attend to essential and urgent needs. However, in Bishnupur district, the relaxation period is shorter, from 5 am to 10 am.

Authorities have made it clear that carrying any form of weapon is strictly prohibited during these hours. This includes sticks, stones, unlicensed firearms and any object that could be used as an offensive weapon.

Retail shops and other establishments have been permitted to operate during the relaxation period, in line with the directions issued by district authorities.

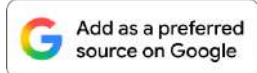
Following the April 7 bomb attack, large-scale protests have been taking place across the Imphal valley districts. Thousands of people, including many women and members of civil society groups, have been holding daily demonstrations.

Protesters have strongly condemned the attack and are demanding strict action against those responsible.

NIA takes over investigation

The Manipur government has handed over the investigation into the Bishnupur bomb attack to the National Investigation Agency.

Agency inputs



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