

## Indefinite Suspension of Internet Not Permissible, Review Orders in a Week, Says SC

Source – The Wire  
New Delhi, Jan 10

The Supreme Court on Friday stated that the internet ban in Jammu and Kashmir without limiting it to a particular duration is not only violation of the telecom rules, but also of the freedom of speech and expression granted by the Constitution. The three-judge bench comprising justices N.V. Ramana, R. Subhash Reddy and B.R. Gavai, after hearing a clasp of petitions challenging the constitutionality of the Centre's decision to lockdown Jammu and Kashmir following reading down of Article 370 since August last year, pointed out that freedom of speech and expression includes the right to receive and disseminate information.

The apex court asked the J&K administration to review all restrictive orders imposed

within a week.

The internet has been suspended for more than 150 days in Kashmir, making it the longest blackout in any democracy.

The court asked the administration to publish every order of restriction under Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to enable those affected by them to challenge it. The bench added that any order passed will be subject to judicial review.

The court also observed that trade and commerce are dependent on the internet, and the freedom to practice such trade is constitutionally protected under Article 19(1)(g).

The bench said the

government should follow the principle of proportionality to adopt less restrictive measures.

Justice Ramana began delivering the judgment by saying that the court has not "delved into the political intent behind the prohibitory orders".

"Our limited concern is to find a balance regarding security and liberty of people. We only here to ensure citizens are provided their rights. We will not delve into the political intent behind the orders given," Justice Ramana said, according to *LiveLaw*.

"Kashmir has seen a lot of violence. We will try our best to balance the human rights and freedoms with the issue of security", he added.

By Raju Vernekar  
Mumbai, Jan 10

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) attached to the Union Labour Ministry is likely to reduce the rate of interest on provident fund this month, thus affecting over 8 crore employees throughout the country. EPFO is likely to announce reduction in interest rate after meetings of its investment officials and executive committee members and the central board of trustees (CBT). The decision comes amid economic slowdown, lower yields for debt market instruments and lower interest rates on similar products including public provident fund and government provident fund.

The rate of interest was upwardly revised to 8.65 percent from earlier 8.55 per cent last year. However now

## Cut in provident fund interest rate on cards

due to resource crunch, it is likely to be reduced by 15-25 basis points for this financial year, well placed sources here said. A basis point is one-hundredth of a percentage point.

Millions of salaried people are required to mandatorily invest in the EPFO. They would earn lower returns for the financial year ending March 31, 2020. EPFO was offering subscribers an interest of 8.65 per cent in 2018-19.

The EPF payout is impacted by 55 to 70 basis points in case interest rates in the market falls a 100 basis point. It is therefore likely that the EPFO would find it difficult to offer 8.65 per cent interest this financial year. The EPFO invests 85 per cent of its annual accruals in debt market and 15 per cent in equities through exchange-traded funds.

The EPFO was left with a surplus of Rs 151 crore in 2018-19 after an 8.65 per cent payout - much less than the surplus of Rs 586 crore in 2017-18.

EPFO had offered an interest of 8.65% in the 2018-19 fiscal after taking seven months to convince the finance ministry of the viability of its proposal. "The economic downturn is

visible this year. The falling returns on debt instruments will force the EPFO to tinker its 2019-20 payout downwards," the officials said and added that the long-term fixed deposits and some bond yields have gone down by between 50 and 90 basis points in the last one year and one cannot ignore those indicators."

"Besides, the 10-year benchmark government securities or G-Sees went down between 85 and 90 basis points between January 2019 and January 2020" and that would be a drag on EPFO's earnings," officials added.

Two more developments could force a rate cut. First, investments made in small savings instruments such as public provident fund and government provident fund are at present earning only 7.99 per cent. Second, EPFO this year has found it hard to recover some of its previous investments in crisis-ridden shadow lender Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services Ltd (ILFSL) and troubled mortgage lender Dewan Housing Finance Corp Ltd (DHFL) (Some of the DHFL directors have already

been arrested in connection with multi crore fraud in the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank). Despite attempts, about Rs.1,300 crore of workers' money, invested directly by EPFO, is stuck with these two firms.

CBT, led by the union labour minister, is the apex decision-making body of EPFO, which manages a corpus of over Rs.12 trillion and has an active subscriber base of more than 60 million. It comprising representatives of the government, employers and employees, discusses the EPFO's earnings for the year before deciding the provident fund interest rate that needs to be approved by the finance ministry.

Employees' representatives in Central Board of Trustees (CBT) confirmed that 2019-20 is likely to be a tough year, but said they would push EPFO to maintain the 8.65% rate of return for the current fiscal. "We know it's a tough year, but we shall push for maintaining 8.65% EPF payout," said Prabhakar Banasura, a CBT member representing employees. A labour ministry spokesperson declined to offer comments in this regard.

## FEW & WODA bids farewell to DC Jiribam

IT News  
Jiribam, Jan. 10

The Friendly Environmental Warriors (FEW) and War on Drugs Association (WODA), Jiribam organised a farewell ceremony to the outgoing Deputy Commissioner of Jiribam District Rajkumar Mayanglambam (IAS) at PWD Guest, Jiribam today.

The farewell ceremony was attended by Rajkumar Mayanglambam, DC Jiribam; K. Saratkumar Singh, Vice Chairman, Manipur Food Industries Corporation Ltd, K. Puna Singh, President, Friendly Environmental Warriors, Jiribam; S. Shanti Devi, Chairperson, Jiribam Municipal Council; Th.



Amurashi Chanu, ZEO Jiribam; Y. Chandrasakhi Devi, Gen. Secy WODA, Jiribam; Makhon Das, Pradhan, Latingkal GP, Jiribam; Ng. Biswajit Singh; All Jiribam Working Journalists Union; S. Shusila Devi, President, All Jiribam Meira Paibi, Jiribam; W. Mema Devi, President, Jiribam Ima Meira Paibi Apunba Lup; N. Nivaran Devi, President,

WASED, Jiribam shared the dais as presidium members. The Friendly Environmental Warriors, Jiribam; War on Drugs Association presented gifts to outgoing Deputy Commissioner of Jiribam Rajkumar Mayanglambam for his extraordinary services and dedication to the people of Jiribam during his short term posting at Jiribam District.

## DISTRICT LEVEL HANDLOOM EXPO 2019-20 NOTICE

Imphal, the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020

No. 29/AWAS/H/MELA/2017-2018 The Manipur Apex Handloom Weavers & handicrafts Artisans cooperative Society Ltd.(AWAS) is inviting applications from the registered weavers cooperative societies, SHGs and handloom entrepreneurs for participating in the District level Handloom Expo 2019-20 at Thiyam Konjil Awang Leikai, Keirao Block, Imphal East to be organised from 15/01/2020 to 19/01/2020 under National Handloom Development programme (NHDP) of the Development Commissioner for Handlooms Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India. Registration last date is 14/01/2020. Details can be had from the office of the Apex Handloom (AWAS) during office hours.

Sd/-

Business Manager  
AWAS, Manipur  
9366615975/7308922189

## Akhil produced in NIA court; greets people with 'Joi Aai Axom'

Agency  
Guwahati, Jan. 10

Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) leader and RTI activist Akhil Gogoi on Friday expressed his gratitude to the people of Assam for continuing the agitation against the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019.

Akhil, on Friday, was produced before the special National Investigative Agency (NIA) Court in Guwahati when he greeted his supporters and media persons with 'Joi Aai Axom'.

"I am grateful for the people of Assam for continuing their protest against the Citizenship



(Amendment) Act. I urge the people to continue their battle against the contentious Act," he said as he was frisked away by security personnel.

Also read: NIA to approach Gauhati High Court seeking Akhil Gogoi's custody

Meanwhile, Akhil's supporters who gathered outside the NIA court greeted

him with a 'gamosa' and shouted slogans demanding his unconditional release.

They also chanted slogans anti-BJP and denounced the police administration.

The KMSS leader first arrested by Assam police on December 12 and on December 17 he was handed over to the NIA.

NIA arrested him under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and took him for a 10-day NIA custody.

Gogoi was produced in a special NIA court on December 26 last after the remand ended.

The NIA court sent Gogoi to 14-day judicial custody.

## Three Days Farmers Training Programme Begins

IT News  
Thoubal, Jan.10

3 day training programme jointly organised by Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Thoubal and Manipur Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium, Imphal on "Exploring Different Types of Organic Input Production from Situ Residues, Packaging & Marketing thereof" began today at the training hall of KVK, Thoubal. Under the aegis of National Institute of Agricultural Marketing, Jaipur. The inaugural function was attended by Director of Agriculture Manipur Lallanpui Vanchhong IAS as Chief Guest of the Inaugural Function, Project Coordinator, Manipur Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium, MS Khaidem, Sr. Manager of NE

India OneCert International (P) Ltd Dr. L. Ibomcha Singh and Senior Scientist and Head, KVK, Thoubal, Dr. S. Zeshmarani Devi as the Presidium Members.

On the opening day, Sr. Manager of NE India OneCert International (P) Ltd Dr. L. Ibomcha Singh, SMS Agronomy of KVK Thoubal N Tomba, Programme Assistant, S. Prabin and Senior Scientist and Head, KVK, Thoubal, Dr. S. Zeshmarani Devi spoke on the topics "Processing, Labelling, Packaging of Organic Products of Black Rice", "Nutrient Management in Organic Farming", "Different Kinds of Composting and Scop for Marketing" and "Role of Livestock and its Importance in Organic Inputs Products" as the resource persons. The

resource persons also responded to different queries raised by the farmers.

The 2nd day of the training programme will be participated by APO (MOVCD) Agri Kh. Nimaichand Singh, Agronomist of Agri. Dept. S. Sanatomba Singh, Programme Assistant, S. Prabin and Project Coordinator, Manipur Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium, MS Khaidem as the resource persons.

The resource persons for the 3rd will be SMS (PBG) KVK Imphal West S. Gunamani Singh, Scientist of Soil Science ICAR Imphal, MD of Green Biotech Imphal Y. Geetashwori Devi, Sr. Inspector & Reviewer OneCert International (P) Ltd and Dy Director (Skill & Marketing) of NIAM Jaipur Dr. S.R. Singh.

## NSF shows Solidarity to Students & Teachers of JNU

IT News  
Imphal, Jan 10

The Naga Students Federation (NSF) expressed strong condemnation to the unprovoked attack and brutalities unleashed upon the students and teachers of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) by masked right wing goons.

A statement by NSF said that a university space should be one that encourages minds to read, write, debate, and discuss. As a part of this, they should also have the freedom to question the prevailing systems of governance and that no attempt, whatsoever, should be made to mute the

dissenting voices using means that are not in the right democratic and secular spirit. "The barbaric attack on the students and teachers of the nation's premier university is a manifestation of the growing xenophobic agenda of a certain section of people within the country which is fuelled by far right wing Hindu nationalist principles. Terror unleashed within the campus extremist mob does not augur well for the future of Indian democracy and its institutions", the statement added.

"It is truly unfortunate and saddening for NSF to see that students are not safe on the campus and even in the

hostels", the statement added.

The student body appealed all concerned authorities to take up immediate and necessary measures in all educational institutions across the country in order to ensure that the unwanted precedent set at JNU is not repeated in any other parts of the country.

The NSF also extended its solidarity to the student movement in JNU and demands for an independent and impartial probe into the incident and that strong actions be initiated against the perpetrators and all those who abetted the heinous attack.

## Assam Rifles recovers contraband drugs worth 2.8 crores in khudengthabi

IGAR (South)  
Imphal Jan 10

Troops of Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) recovered contraband drugs worth approximately Rs 2.83 Crore from Khudengthabi Check Post in Tengenoupal District on 07 January 2020.

The troops at the check post stopped a suspicious Grey coloured Ecco Van (Regn No - MN 04 A 6949) which was moving from Moreh towards Imphal. It was driven by Mr Manlun Haozalian Zou, age 35 yrs resident of Machi village, Chandel District along with two passengers namely Mr Lhunkholal Lhundim, age 30 yrs r/o Khotenphai village, Chandel District and Mrs. S. Sundaywon age 48 yrs r/o Salemram village, Chandel District. During checking of the vehicle, approximately 904 grams of suspected Brown Sugar and 206 Gms of suspected Heroin with approximate total worth of Rs 2,83,80,000- (Two crores eighty three lakhs eighty thousands) only in the International market were recovered.

The recovered contraband items and the apprehended persons have been handed over to Moreh Police Station for further investigation.