



Restoration of 4G Internet in J&K

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Why in News

Recently, a **special committee set up by the Supreme Court of India** has recommended **restoration of 4G internet services** in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).

Key Points

- **Committee's Recommendation:**

- The committee is of the view that the **threat perception on the security front** in J&K continues **to be high**.
- However, it has recommended to restore 4G internet services **after 15th August 2020 on a trial basis** in a careful manner in specified areas to assess the impact on the security situation.
- The **internet could be restored in one district each of Jammu region and Kashmir region** which are away from the international border or line of control, and has low intensity of terrorist activities.
- Telecom operators in the districts which are allowed to have 4G services on a trial basis may also **have to submit reports of data usage** volume and which apps are being used the most.
- The committee is also of the view that **internet speed related restrictions are not posing any hindrance** to **Covid** control measures, access to education programmes or carrying out business activities.

According to it there is adequate access to the internet through broadband services available over landline to business and healthcare institutions.

- **Background:**
 - High speed internet services in J&K were suspended in August 2019, when the **Centre announced revocation of J&K's special status** and **bifurcation** of the state into two Union Territories (UTs).
 - According to the Centre, the same was being done in order **to avoid violence**. It has maintained that faster internet services can be misused in the region by elements opposed to peace, who act at the behest of a hostile neighbour to spread rumours and arouse passions of the public and disturb the atmosphere in the J&K.
- **Impact of Lifting the 4G Ban:**
 - **Promote Commercial Activity:** Resumption of 4G in the J&K will be beneficial for citizens engaged in commercial activities that are dependent on high-speed internet. E.g. e-commerce, travel bookings, filing of GST and income tax returns.
 - **Education and Job:** It will also help the students to access the online classes, till the school and colleges are closed due to Covid-19 pandemic.
It will allow people to work from home.
 - **Health:** 4G services are necessary to provide access to the medical fraternity including patients to access latest information, advisories, and guidelines.

Way Forward

The Centre needs to balance between security of the J&K and rights to the people. It is required to continuously assess the situation in J&K and take further actions accordingly.

Source: IE