

Protester Killed During Violent Clashes in Manipur; Curfew Imposed and Internet Suspended in Seven Districts



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Tensions escalated in Manipur's violence-hit Jiribam district on Sunday night as clashes between security forces and protesters turned deadly, officials reported. A young protester, identified as 21-year-old K. Athouba, was fatally shot amid the chaos. A police official confirmed that an investigation is underway to determine who fired the fatal shot, while protesters allege that a Manipur Police special commando unit was responsible. Two others were reported injured in the incident.

The violence erupted as mobs attacked and vandalized properties belonging to political leaders and various party offices. According to police reports, the unrest began at Babupara before spreading to other areas under the Jiribam police station's jurisdiction. The rioting was sparked by outrage over the kidnapping and killing of three women and three children, allegedly by militants, on November 11.

Mobs, comprising men and women, ransacked offices of political parties, including the Congress, BJP, and Shiv Sena, and targeted the residences of Jiribam's Independent MLA. Despite widespread violence in Jiribam, officials reported no significant incidents from other districts in Manipur since Sunday night.

In response to the escalating situation, the Manipur government ordered the closure of all educational institutions in the curfew-bound districts of Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur, Thoubal, and Kakching for two days. Daryal Juli Anal, Joint Secretary of the Higher and Technical Education Department, issued an order citing safety concerns for students and teachers.

The state imposed an indefinite curfew in Imphal East, Imphal West, Bishnupur, Thoubal, and Kakching districts to control the deteriorating law and order situation. Chief Secretary Vineet Joshi also mandated a two-day suspension of mobile internet and data services in seven districts, including Kangpokpi and Churachandpur, to curb the spread of misinformation and restore calm.

The unrest follows the discovery of six bodies on November 15 and 16 near the Jiri and Barak rivers along the Manipur-Assam border. The deceased are believed to be the missing women and children abducted on November 11 from Jakuradhor in Jiribam's Borobekra sub-division. The bodies were transported to Silchar Medical College and Hospital in Assam for post-mortem examinations.

The incident at Jakuradhor, which initially involved the kidnapping of ten Meitei community members by suspected Kuki militants, left two elderly civilians dead. The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) reported an encounter on November 11 in which 10 suspected militants were killed.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has taken over three pivotal cases related to the recent violence, following a directive from the Ministry of Home Affairs. These include the November 8 murder of a woman in Jiribam, an attack on a CRPF post on November 11, and the burning of civilian homes in Borobekra. These incidents have contributed to a volatile atmosphere in the region.

Security has been reinforced around key locations, including the Chief Minister's residence and the Raj Bhavan, while vehicle movement in affected areas remains restricted. The situation remains tense as authorities work to restore order and investigate the violence that has claimed lives and disrupted daily life in Manipur.

In related developments, the Supreme Court Collegium has recommended the appointment of Justice D Krishnakumar of the Madras High Court as the next Chief Justice of Manipur High Court, succeeding Justice Siddharth Mridul, who is set to retire on November 21, 2024.

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