

Inner Line Permit (ILP)

An Inner Line Permit (ILP) is a travel document officially issued by the concerned state government permitting inward travel of an Indian citizen in a protected territory.

The Inner Line Permit was in the news recently when, in December 2020, Union Home Minister Amit Shah stated that the ILP was an “important step taken by the Central Government towards the betterment of the state of Manipur”.

This article will give details about the Inner Line Permit within the context of the Civil Services Examination.

Overview of the Inner Line Permit

The Inner Line Permit was implemented as part of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873. It was enacted to protect the commercial interests of the British Empire by preventing its subjects (at the time, Indians) from trading in these regions.

Upon independence, the ‘British Citizens’ was replaced with ‘Indian Citizens’. The ILP was applicable earlier to 3 northeastern states: Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

On December 11th 2020, Manipur became the fourth northeastern state after an order to include the Inner Line Permit was signed by President Ram Nath Kovind.

An Inner Line Permit was first required in some parts of the Leh District in Ladakh. It was abolished on 1 May 2014, but foreign nationals were required to get a Protected Area Permit. Yet, in 2017 it was implemented once more in 2017. Legislators and the general public in Meghalaya, Assam and Andaman and Nicobar islands also have demands for the implementation of the ILP in their respective states.

Applicability of the Inner Line Permit

The details of to whom the Inner Line Permit is applicable is given in the below:

1. Manipur: ILP is valid for domestic tourists. No permit is required for foreign tourists but they have to register themselves with the Superintendent of Police (CID/SB).
2. Mizoram: ILP needed for domestic tourists, but foreign tourists have to register themselves with the Superintendent of Police (CID/SB).
3. Nagaland: ILP needed for domestic tourists, but foreign tourists have to register themselves at the nearest police station.

4. Arunachal Pradesh: Tourists need a Protected Area Permit (PAP) or Restricted Area Permit (RAP) from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India.

***Note:** Since Dimapur district is a commercial hub, it is the only place in Nagaland exempt from the ILP regime.

Importance of Inner Line Permit

The Inner Line Permit is important due to the following reasons:

- Indigenous culture and tradition can be better preserved
- Illegal migrants and encroachment is checked due to the presence of an ILP
- The ILP is an important safeguard to safeguard the delicate demographic balance of the tribals in the Northeast region.

Although an Inner Line Permit is an important step taken to preserve the demographics of the Northeastern states, better solutions are needed to strengthen further.

Frequently Asked Questions Related to Inner Line Permit?

Are states with Inner Line Permit in place exempted from the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019?

Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Mizoram were exempted from the provisions of the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019 due to the ILP in place.

How is a Protected Area Permit different from an Inner Line Permit?

The Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order 1958 stipulates that a Protected Area Permit (PAP) is required for foreigners to visit certain areas of Northeast India. Indian citizens who are not residents of these areas need an Inner Line Permit (ILP) to enter these places.