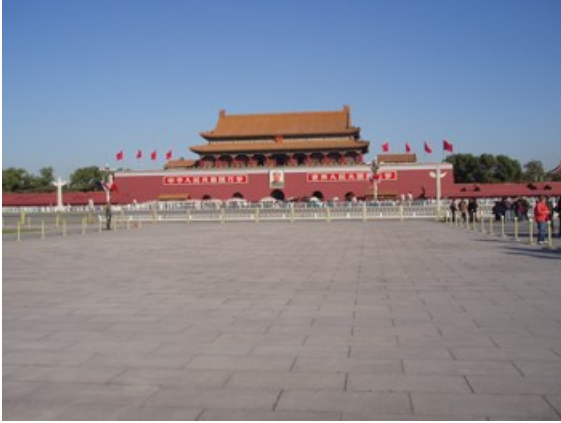


Reuters websites blocked in China

BEIJING, CHINA: Reuters news websites were inaccessible in China on Friday, the latest Western news organisation to be blocked in a country where censors keep a tight grip over information...



Beijing... China's Communist Party oversees a vast censorship system dubbed the Great Firewall and brooks no criticism (Image: Heather Baker)

Attempts by AFP in China to open the agency's English- and Chinese-language websites returned only an error message saying that the page "can't be displayed".

Reuters said in a report that users first experienced difficulties accessing the sites late on Thursday.

China's Communist Party oversees a vast censorship system - dubbed the Great Firewall - that aggressively blocks sites or snuffs out Internet and TV content and commentary on topics considered sensitive, such as Beijing's human rights record and criticisms of the government.

Popular social network sites such as Facebook and Twitter are inaccessible in the country, as is Youtube.

Several Western news organisations have accused China of blocking access to their websites in the past, including *The New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal* and Bloomberg.

Reuters said Friday access to its websites had been cut off "at times," often after the publication of stories about which "the Chinese government is sensitive".

"Reuters is committed to practising fair and accurate journalism worldwide," it quoted an unnamed spokeswoman as saying

in a statement.

"We recognise the great importance of news about China to all our customers, and we hope that our sites will be restored in China soon," she added.

Source: AFP, via I-Net Bridge

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