

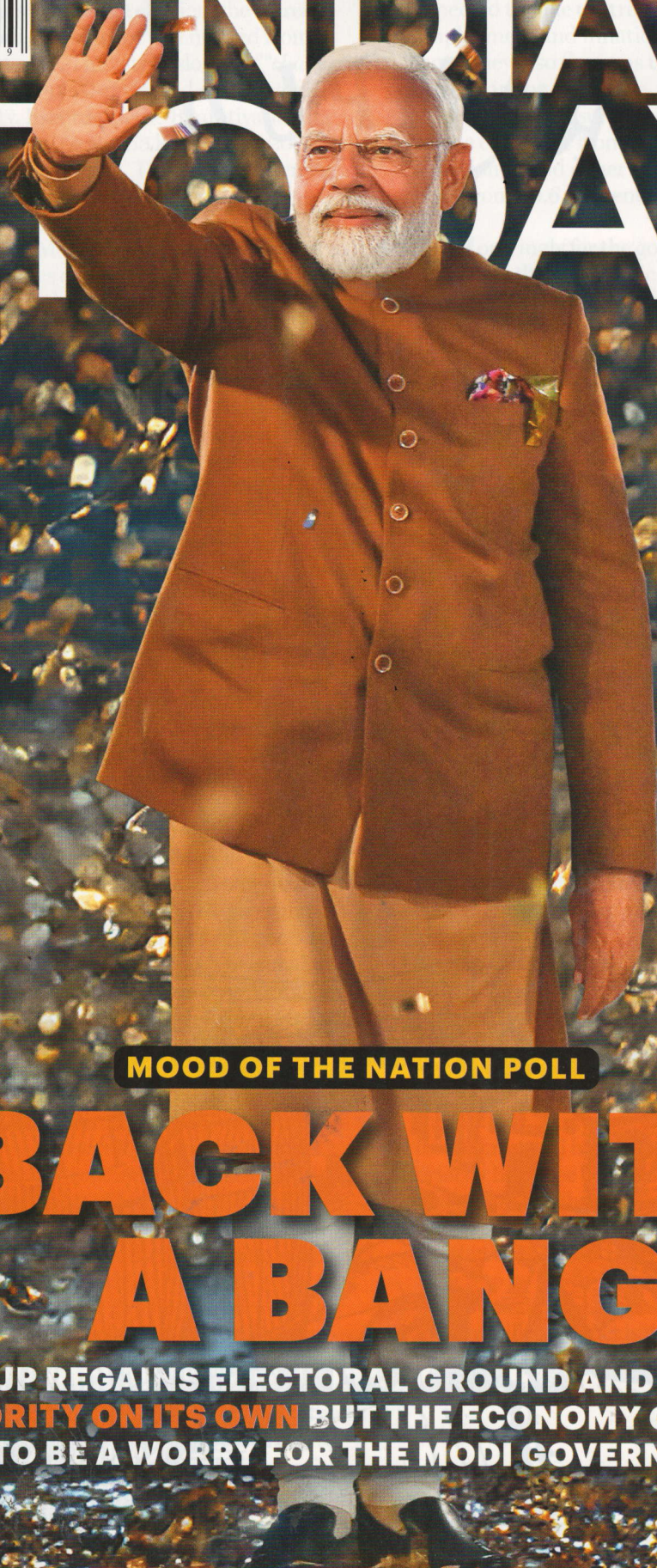
SPECIAL ISSUE

www.indiatoday.in



FEBRUARY 24, 2025 ₹100

INDIA TODAY



Prime Minister
Narendra Modi

MOOD OF THE NATION POLL

BACK WITH A BANG

THE BJP REGAINS ELECTORAL GROUND AND WILL WIN A
MAJORITY ON ITS OWN BUT THE ECONOMY CONTINUES
TO BE A WORRY FOR THE MODI GOVERNMENT

CHAIRMAN AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Arjun Purie
VICE CHAIRPERSON AND EXECUTIVE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Kalli Purie
GROUP CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Dinesh Bhatia
GROUP EDITORIAL DIRECTOR: Raj Chennappa
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Manoj Sharma
GROUP CREATIVE EDITOR: Nilanjana Das; **GROUP PHOTO EDITOR:** Bandede Singh
EDITOR (FEATURES): Kai Jabir Friese
MANAGING EDITORS: Sunil Menon, S. Sahaya Ranjit; **MUMBAI:** M.G. Arun
EXECUTIVE EDITORS: Manisha Saroop, Kaushik Deka
SENIOR DEPUTY EDITORS: Sangram K. Parhi, Sasi Nair;
HYDERABAD: Amarnath K. Menon
DEPUTY EDITORS: Anilash S. Mahajan, Pradip R. Sagar;
JAIPOUR: Rohit Parihar; **MUMBAI:** Suhan Singh
SENIOR EDITORS: Sonali Acharye, Ashish Mukherjee, Saikat Niyogi;
PATNA: Amitabh Srivastava
SENIOR ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Sonal Khertapal; **MUMBAI:** Dhaval, S. Kulkarni;
AHMEDABAD: Juman Shah; **BHOPAL:** Rahul Noronha
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Avishek G. Dashtdar, Vipul Grover; **BENGALURU:** Ajay Sukumaran
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT: KOLKATA: Arkamoy Datta Majumdar
PHOTO DEPARTMENT: Chandra Deep Kumar, Rajwant Singh Rawat (Deputy Chief Photographers), Arun Kumar (Principal Photographer);
MUMBAI: Mandar Suresh Deodhar (Chief Photographer)
PHOTO RESEARCHERS: Prabhakar Tiwari (Deputy Visual Research Editor),
 Saloni Vaid (Chief Photo Researcher),
 Jodha Singh Adhikari (Principal Photo Researcher)
CHIEF OF GRAPHICS: Tanmoy Chakraborty
ART DEPARTMENT: Sanjay Piplani (Creative Editor),
 Anghuman De (Senior Art Director), Rajesh Kumar Angira, Bhoomesh Dutt
 Sharma (Associate Art Directors), Santosh Kumar Sharma (Assistant Art
 Director), Praveen Kumar Gummedi (Chief Designer),
 Siddhant Jumsde (Chief Illustrator)
PRODUCTION DEPARTMENT: Harish Agarwal (Chief of Production),
 Naveen Gupta (Chief Coordinator)

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
 Suparna Kumar

IMPACT TEAM
 Senior General Managers: Jitendra Lad (West), Syed Naveed (Chennai)
GROUP CHIEF MARKETING OFFICER: Vivek Malhotra

SALES AND OPERATIONS
 Deepak Bhatt, National Head (Distribution)
 Vipin Bagga, General Manager (Operations)
 Rajeev Gandhi, General Manager (North)
 Yogesh Godhanlal Gautam, Regional Sales Manager (West)



Volume 50-Number 8; For the week

February 18-24, 2025, published on every Friday

- Editorial/Corporate Office Living Media India Ltd., India Today Group
 Mediaplex, FC-8, Sector-16A, Film City, Noida - 201301; Phone: 0120-4807100
- Subscriptions: For assistance contact, Customer Care, India Today Group,
 C-9, Sector-10, Noida (UP) - 201301. email: wecare@intoday.com;
 Phone / Whatsapp: +91 8597 778 778 (Monday to Friday, 10 am - 6 pm).
- Sales: Direct all trade enquiries to General Manager (Sales), Living Media India
 Limited, C-9, Sector-10, Noida-201301 (UP).
- Regd. Office: F-26, First Floor, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001.
- Impact Offices: 1201, 12th Floor, Tower 2 A, One Indiabulls Centre,
 (Jupiter Mills), S.B. Marg, Lower Parel (West), Mumbai-400013;
 Phone: 022 69193355; Fax: 66063226
- E-1, Ground Floor, Videcon Towers, Jhandewalan Extn, New Delhi.
- Door No: 610, 610A, 612, 5th Floor, Block A, Imperial Chaitanya Building,
 Anna Salai, Teynampet, Chennai, Tamilnadu-600018.
- 201-204 Richmond Towers, 2nd Floor, 12, Richmond Road,
 Bangalore-560025; Phones: 22212448, 22213037, 22218343; Fax: 22218335;
- 52, Jawaharal Nehru Road, 4th Floor, Kolkata-700071; Phones: 22825398;
 Fax: 22827254; • 6-3-885/7/B, Somajiguda, Hyderabad-500082;
 Phone: 23401657, 23400479, 23410100, 23402481, 23410982, 23411498;
 Fax: 23403484 • 39/1045, Karakkatt Road, Kochi 682016; Phones: 2377057,
 2377058; Fax: 2377059 • 2/C, "Suryarth Bldg", 2nd Floor, Behind White
 House, Panchwati, Office C.G. Road, Ahmedabad-380006; Phone: 26560393,
 26560929; Fax: 26565293 • Copyright Living Media India Ltd. All rights
 reserved throughout the world. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited.

Printed and published by Manoj Sharma on behalf of Living Media
 India Limited. Printed at Thomson Press India Limited,
 18-35 Milestone, Delhi Mathura Road, Faridabad-121007, (Haryana)
 and at Rajhans Enterprises, 184, Industrial Town, 4th Main Road, Rajajinagar,
 Bengaluru-560044, (Karnataka).

Published at F-26, First Floor, Connaught Place, New Delhi-110001.

Editor: Raj Chennappa.

• INDIA TODAY does not take the responsibility for returning unsolicited publication material.

All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of
 competent courts and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only

For reprint rights and syndication enquiries, contact
 syndications@intoday.com or call +91-120-4078000
 www.syndicationtoday.in



RAJWANT RAWAT

MOOD OF THE NATION POLL

BACK WITH A BANG

The BJP regains electoral ground and will win a majority on its own but the economy continues to be a worry for the Modi government

UPFRONT
PRESIDENT'S RULE:
MENDING MANIPUR PG 5

ASSEMBLY POLLS:
HOW BJP WON
DELHI PG 7

INSIDE

LEISURE
MUSIC: BAITHAKS
ARE BACK PG 57

Q&A WITH
GULAMMOHAMMED
SHEIKH PG 66

ECONOMY

22 THE GROWTH
DILEMMA

THE OPPOSITION

28 THE GRAND
ILLUSION

BEST CMs

32 PERFECT 10
FOR YOGI

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

36 HANDLE
WITH CAUTION

SOCIO-POLITICAL

38 IN A STATE
OF FLUX

WORK-LIFE BALANCE

42 BLOCK THE
BURNOUT

SPORTS

44 KNIGHTS OF
THE ARENA

ENTERTAINMENT

46 NEW STARS
RISING

50 ENVIRONMENT CONCLAVE AN ECOLOGICAL EQUILIBRIUM

The first ever India Today Environment Conclave, held in Bengaluru, focused on some of the pressing green challenges facing Karnataka and the country, including climate change and man-animal conflict

Cover Photograph by ARUN KUMAR; Digital Imaging by AMARJEET SINGH NAGI

Note to the reader From time to time, you will see pages titled 'An Impact Feature' or 'Focus' in INDIA TODAY. These are no different from advertisements, and the magazine's editorial staff is not involved in their creation in any way.



Readers are recommended to make appropriate enquiries before sending money, incurring expenses or entering into commitments in relation to any advertisement appearing in this publication. The India Today Group does not vouch for any claims made by the advertisers of products and services. The printer, publisher, editor-in-chief and the editor of the India Today Group publications shall not be held liable for any consequences in the event of such claims not being honoured by the advertisers.



SCAN HERE TO
 SUBSCRIBE

FOR SUBSCRIPTION ASSISTANCE, CONTACT: Customer Care,
 India Today Group, C-9, Sector-10, Noida (UP) - 201301.
 email: wecare@intoday.com | Phone / Whatsapp: +91 8597 778 778
 (Monday to Friday, 10 am - 6 pm)

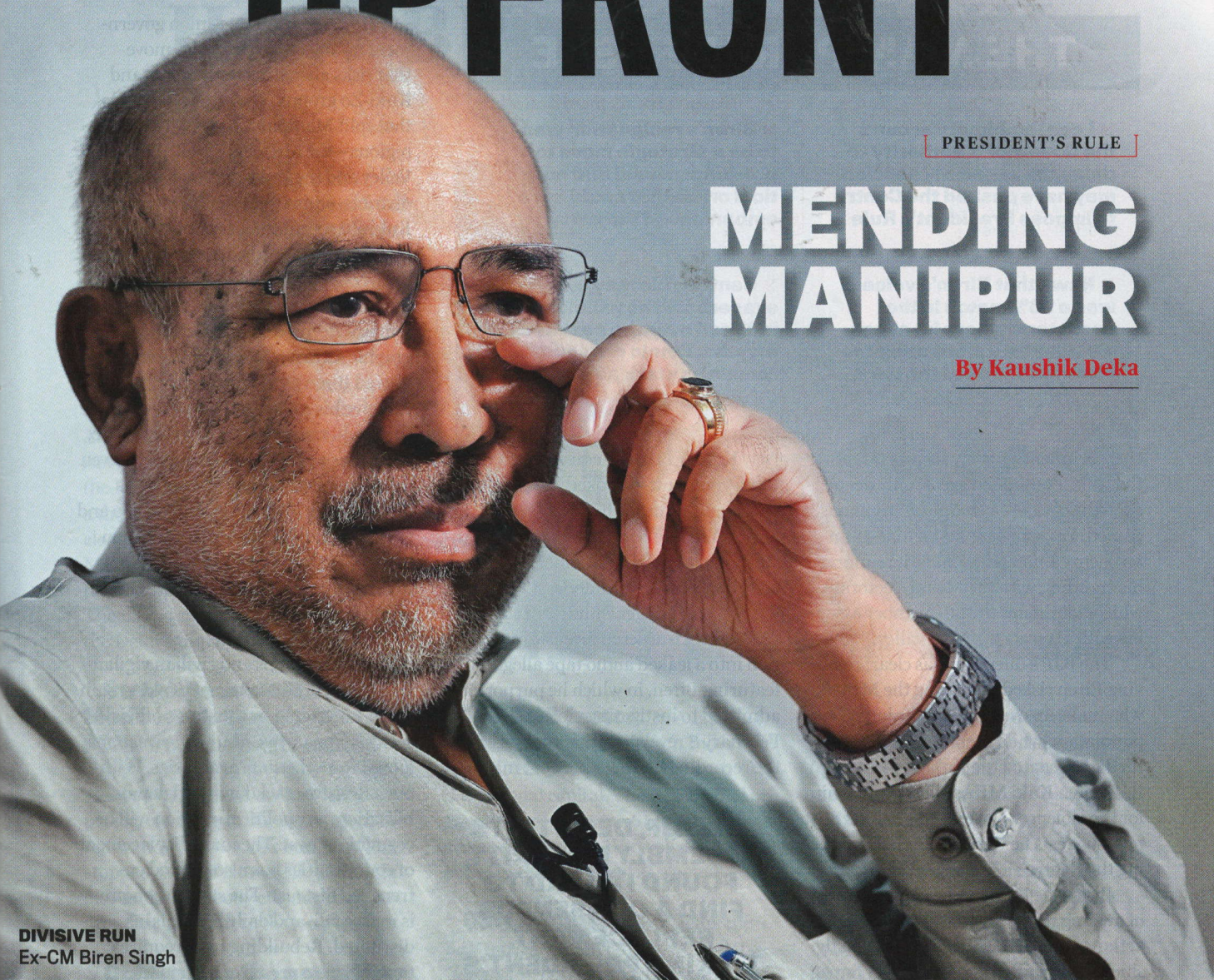
E-MAIL to:
 letters.editor@intoday.com or
 log on to www.indiatoday.in

UPFRONT

PRESIDENT'S RULE

MENDING MANIPUR

By Kaushik Deka



DIVISIVE RUN
Ex-CM Biren Singh

CHANDRADEEP KUMAR

Around the same time in the evening when President's Rule was imposed in Manipur on February 13, N. Biren Singh, who had stepped down as chief minister just four days earlier, took to social media platform X with a lengthy post addressing his "indigenous" friends. Referencing a 2022 post about the arrest of a Myanmar national with a fake Aadhaar card, he urged authorities to take stringent action and ramp up efforts to deport illegal immigrants from Manipur. Describing illegal immigration as a crisis, he recounted how he had

gone after said illegals until ethnic violence erupted on May 3, 2023, following which the state machinery struggled to keep up. Biren warned that Manipur's ungarded 398-km border with Myanmar and the Free Movement Regime (FMR) pact were rapidly altering the state's demographic composition, posing an existential threat to the local population. And then he vowed to continue this fight "in every way he can".

Biren's post offers an implicit rationale for why the BJP-led central government hesitated for 21 months before considering a leadership change in a state

where ethnic violence has killed over 250, displaced more than 60,000, and redrawn its geography along communal lines. At the heart of the conflict is the Meitei community's fear of demographic shifts due to alleged illegal immigration of Kuki-Zo-Hmar people from Myanmar—a claim whose scale remains contested but was amplified into a rallying call by the Biren Singh government.

To the Kuki population, this was less about border security and more about ethnic persecution by a Meitei-dominated state. Biren's aggressive crackdowns on alleged drug trafficking and forest