

PRESIDENT'S RULE: POLITY

NEWS: *When can President's Rule be imposed?*

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

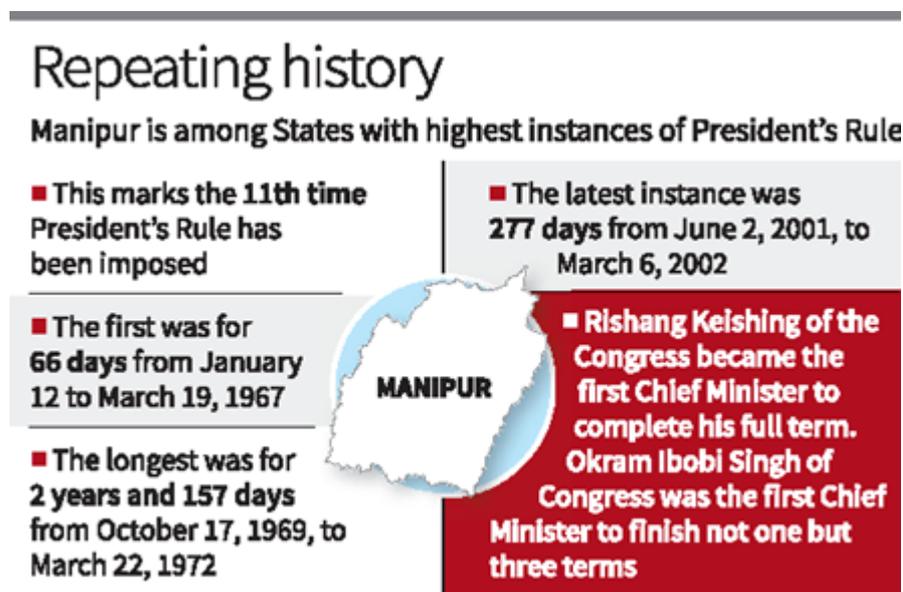
President's Rule was imposed in Manipur due to ongoing ethnic violence between Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities, following a constitutional breakdown reported by the Governor and the resignation of the Chief Minister, with the Legislative Assembly put under suspended animation.

Ethnic Violence in Manipur:

- **Communities Involved:** The conflict primarily involves the Kuki-Zo and Meitei ethnic groups.
- **Casualties and Displacement:** The violence has resulted in over 250 deaths and displaced approximately 60,000 people since May 2023.

Political Developments:

- **Resignation of Chief Minister:** N. Biren Singh resigned in February 2025 after discussions with the Home Minister, indicating a severe governance crisis.
- **Imposition of President's Rule:** Based on the Governor's report of a constitutional breakdown, President Droupadi Murmu invoked Article 356, placing the state under central control.



Constitutional Basis for President's Rule:

- **Article 356 of the Indian Constitution:** This article empowers the President to impose President's Rule in a state if he/she receives a report from the state's Governor, or otherwise, that the governance of the state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

Grounds for Imposition:

- **Breakdown of Constitutional Machinery:** If the state government is unable to function according to Constitutional provisions, President's Rule may be imposed. This could be due to political unrest, violent conflicts, or inability to elect a leader.
- **Failure to Comply with Union Directives:** Under Article 365, if a state government fails to comply with or give effect to directions from the Central government, this can also be a ground for the imposition of President's Rule.

Process and Duration:

- **Initial Proclamation:** The imposition starts with a proclamation by the President, which must be approved by both houses of Parliament within two months.
- **Duration:** It can last initially for six months and can be extended in six-month increments with the approval of Parliament, with a maximum duration of three years under certain conditions such as national emergency.
- **State Legislature's Status:** The state legislature is either dissolved or placed under suspended animation during President's Rule. If dissolved, elections must be held within six months.

Judicial Safeguards:

- **S.R. Bommai vs Union of India (1994):** This landmark Supreme Court judgment stated that the power under Article 356 is subject to judicial review. The Court held that the reasons for imposing President's Rule are examinable, and there must be relevant material that constitutes a failure of constitutional machinery.
- **Immediate Dissolution:** The assembly cannot be dissolved until the proclamation is approved by Parliament.

Past Instances and Misuse:

- **Historical Usage:** Since its introduction, President's Rule has been imposed in various states for reasons ranging from political instability to emergencies. The first instance was in Punjab in 1951.
- **Criticism and Potential for Misuse:** President's Rule has often been criticized as being prone to misuse by central governments, particularly as a tool against opposition-ruled states.

Impact on Governance:

- **Administrative Control:** During President's Rule, the Governor administers the state with the help of advisors appointed by the President or by itself. The state administration is carried out in the name of the President, and the powers of the state legislature are exercised by or under the authority of Parliament.
- **Legislative Powers:** Parliament assumes the legislative powers of the state. The state's budget and laws need approval from Parliament.

Contemporary Relevance and Concerns:

- **Recent Instances:** Instances like in Manipur show the ongoing relevance of this constitutional provision in maintaining governance in states facing instability.
- **Reform Proposals:** Various committees, including the Sarkaria Commission and the Punchhi Commission, have recommended that the provisions for President's Rule be used sparingly, and with greater checks and balances, to prevent any potential misuse.

Current Situation and Future Prospects:

- **Security and Stability:** Ongoing ethnic tensions continue to threaten peace and governance.
- **Demographic and Policy Concerns:** Previous governance linked crises to demographic changes and border policies.
- **Path Forward:** The resolution depends on effective political negotiation and restoring public order.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/manipur/when-can-presidents-rule-be-imposed-explained/article69223369.ece>