

Fracas over VIPism in Manipur



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Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin [Gadkari](#) in April this year removed the red beacon from his car, thus becoming the first Union minister to do away with the VIP culture and exhibitionism.

On April 22, Chief Minister N Biren Singh became the first VIP in [Manipur](#) to remove the red beacon from his car. The move by [Gadkari](#) and Biren came following Union Cabinet's decision that all red beacon lights will have to be removed from official cars, barring emergency service vehicles, from May 1, 2017.

Buoying up the VIP culture in [Manipur](#), unelected BJP [leaders](#) are using security escorts, said N Tombiraj, advisor, All [Manipur](#) Working [Journalists](#)’ Union (AMWJU), the apex media body.

On Tuesday, a sit-in a protest by AMWJU members at Keishampat here backfired the ruling BJP in the [state](#) after party senior [leaders](#) K Saratkumar and RK Shivachandra issued threat and threw out serious charges against union president Wangkhemcha Samjai who recently criticised VIPism those in power in the [state](#).

The demonstration was staged in condemnation of the serious threat issued against union [leader](#) Samjai by the [Manipur](#) Pradesh BJP [leaders](#).

Later, the union submitted a memorandum concerning the issue to [Manipur Governor](#) Dr Najma Heptulla, copies of which were also dashed off to the Press Council of [India](#) (PCI), Indian [Journalists](#) Union (IJU), the [President](#) and Prime Minister.

On November 20, Newspapers in [Imphal](#) did not print any text in their editorial columns as a mark of protest against the burning of copies of a local daily by members of BJP-affiliated Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha [over](#) a “controversial editorial.”

The local language daily Poknapham ran the editorial questioning the way in which the BJP-led government in [Manipur](#) was handling the ongoing peace parleys between the Government of [India](#) and [NSCN](#) (IM).

But the [Manipur](#) BJP had suggested that the immediate trigger of the reaction from the BJYM, the BJP's youth wing, was mention of Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) as a "cattle thief" in the editorial.

In a conflict-ridden [state](#) like [Manipur](#), journalists have often face challenges coming from all angles, including the duly elected governments, thus the scribes in [Manipur](#) have been fighting hard to safeguard the freedom of the press guaranteed under the Constitution.

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