

Journalist Shot in Manipur Days After Nagaland Deputy CM's Threat



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Bg Gogoi 31 August 2025 Updated 31 Aug 11050 views

In a chilling reminder of the dangers faced by the press, **Hornbill TV reporter Dip (Deep) Saikia** was shot in Manipur's Senapati district on Saturday evening, just a week after being publicly threatened by Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister **Yanthungo Patton**. The brazen attack has sent shockwaves across the Northeast, raising urgent questions about political intimidation and the safety of journalists.

Saikia, a young reporter from Assam's Jorhat district, had travelled to Laii village to cover the **Zinnia Flower Festival** when he was targeted. Witnesses say an assailant opened fire, striking him in the leg and underarm. Villagers quickly subdued the attacker, who was reportedly carrying an air gun, and handed him over to police. Saikia was rushed first to the Senapati district hospital and later shifted to Nagaland for advanced treatment. Doctors have described his condition as stable, though one bullet remains lodged in his body.



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The shooting followed an incident on **August 23**, when Deputy Chief Minister Patton singled out Saikia during a public gathering in Wokha district. In a video that sparked outrage, Patton lashed out at the journalist for reporting villagers' complaints about state neglect in the disputed **Rengma Reserve Forest**, part of the long-standing Assam-Nagaland boundary conflict. "I told some people to chase him away," Patton declared, warning Saikia in front of the crowd that he would not tolerate such questions.

The sequence of threat and attack has led to widespread condemnation. Hornbill TV's editor Dzuthono Mekro called the assault "a direct attack on democracy and press freedom." Press clubs across Nagaland and the **Press Club of India** condemned Patton's conduct, while the **Manipur Digital Media Association** described the developments as "a brazen assault on democratic values." Civil society groups have demanded accountability and protection for journalists working in sensitive areas.

Patton, a veteran BJP leader, has been Nagaland's Deputy Chief Minister since 2018 and handles the crucial portfolios of **Home and Border Affairs**. His prominent role in the ongoing border dispute with Assam has often placed him in the political spotlight. The latest controversy, however, has escalated into a full-blown debate on the responsibilities of those in power and the threats faced by independent voices.

For many, the shooting of Dip Saikia is more than an attack on an individual journalist; it is a disturbing signal of how fragile press freedom has become in parts of India's Northeast. It underscores the risks of reporting in conflict-prone areas, where political anger and unresolved disputes often turn into direct threats to those who speak truth to power.

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