

Goodbye, prince of melody.....



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The heartbroken news arrived from Singapore in multiple media outlets, which baffled the people of Assam, but immediately in outrages among the young generation, who were born in eastern India and brought up with the melodious voice of iconic singer Zubeen Garg. The sadness and melancholy soon turned into outrages with a vital question, why Zubeen was taken to Singapore as he was not physically well for months.

Millions of his fans were annoyed when they encountered some clippings of videos on social media, where the singing sensation was seen swimming in the seawater (without a life-jacket), whereas he was cautioned by the doctors in Guwahati to avoid the fire and water body. The netizens cried foul, why his tragic incident was not properly reported, even though a group of Asomiya people had accompanied Zubeen to participate in the North East India Festival, organized in the southeast Asian nation of islands on 19, 20 and 21 September 2025.

For nearly five days, Assam was brought to a standstill, where markets places were closed, streets deserted, people flocked to roadside points with life-size portraits to pay homage to their beloved prince of melody, newspapers dedicated front-pages only with Zubeen related developments and news channels telecast all important updates with true to the term 24 hours a day. Hundreds of thousands of Zubeen-admirers poured on the streets from Guwahati international airport to his residence inside the prehistoric city. Thousands arrived from different parts of northeast India to turn the city into a sea of humans-weeping, sobbing, crying and exclaiming why Zubeen was 'put to die' in the sea thousands of kilometers away from his motherland.

Born to the modest family of Mohini Mohon Borthakur (a retired magistrate with pen-name Kapil Thakur) and Ily Borthakur (a classical singer, who died a few years back) in Tura of Meghalaya, adjacent to western Assam, on 18 November 1972, Zubeen was named in childhood days as Jiban Borthakur. He had two sisters namely Jonkey (who died in a road accident while traveling to a distant place to perform in a cultural show) and Palme, a city-based professional. Married to popular fashion designer Garima Saikia in 2002, Zubeen got instant national fame with his resounding voice in the song 'Ya Ali..' for Bollywood movie Gangster (2006). An animal lover, a philanthropist and versatile genius, Zubeen sang thousands of songs in multiple languages and could play a number of musical instruments. Awarded with various honours, the identical face of Assam's hugely popular Bihu functions in recent decades, Zubeen also produced and acted in Assamese movies.

When fractured and unauthentic reports about his sudden demise in Singapore started beaming, it was really difficult to guess how Zubeen died, was it a mishap in paragliding, scuba diving, yacht or any usual sea outing. Widely circulated newspaper of the island nation, The Straits Times reported on 19 September that Zubeen was admitted in a critical condition at Singapore General Hospital after a freak accident from where the police rescued him from the sea and rushed him to hospital. Although doctors provided treatment to him in the intensive care unit and monitored his condition closely, they could not revive him. Meanwhile, a number of police complaints were lodged in various parts of Assam demanding stringent actions against those involved in the series of events that ultimately led to Zubeen's unfortunate death.

Zubeen's mortal remains were received by Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma at New Delhi international airport and soon he was flown back to Guwahati on 21 September. A flower-decked ambulance carried him driving amidst unprecedented crowds to his Kahilipara residence and later moved to Sarusajai stadium, where Zubeen was put inside a glass-casket, for public viewing and homage. Later he was cremated on 23 September at Kamarkuchi near Guwahati with full state honours after four days of mourning. Thousands of people, who attended his funeral facing searching sunlight, echoed chanting 'Zubeen Garg will live forever' for Assam and Asomiyas in centuries to come. Probably after the demise of Dr Bhupen Hazarika (8 September 1926 – 5 November 2011), a widely acclaimed singer, musician, writer, filmmaker and public communicator, residents of the eastern Indian subcontinent grieved in total with this unforeseen loss. Biday Zubeen.....

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