

When Justice-for-Zubeen campaign gains momentum



Comments 0



Nava Thakuria 28 September 2025 Updated 24 Jun 62893 views

An initial sadness and grief following the unforeseen death of Assam's cultural icon in Singapore at only 53 have slowly turned into outrages with a sole demand for justice to Zubeen Garg, as millions of his fans and admirers got convinced that something wrong had happened to their prince of melody during an unplanned sea-yacht outing in the southeast Asian nation. The heart-breaking news that brought the India's north-eastern State with 3.3 million people to a standstill turning its capital city into a sea of humans weeping, sobbing, crying and exclaiming why Zubeen was put to die in the islands nation, thousands kilometer away from his motherland, on 19 September 2025. The phenomenal singer's last journey in a flower-decked ambulance on 21 September and later keeping his mortal remains at Sarusajai Stadium in Guwahati for public viewing and homage, had witnessed an unprecedented gathering of young people arriving from different parts of north-eastern India. The crowds did not lessen even after Zubeen's cremation on 23 September at Kamarkuchi village, about 20 kilometres east of Guwahati, with full state honours and 21-gun salutes.

Even before his last rites were performed, over 50 police complaints were lodged against Shyamkanu Mahanta (chief organizer of 4th North East India Festival on 19, 20 and 21 September, where Zubeen was scheduled to perform), and Siddharth Sharma (his manager) in various police stations across Assam, where a few FIRs added Shekarjyoti Goswami (a Zubeen associate) and Sanjive Narain (businessman and owner of Prag News satellite channel and Dainik Janambhumi newspaper) alleging that Zubeen had to die in Singapore because of their collective callousness. Facing unprecedented public cries, the State government in Dispur ordered a probe and urgently formed a special investigation team (SIT) under the criminal investigation department (CID) of Assam Police. Even though an autopsy was conducted in Singapore before handing over his body, another post mortem was conducted at Gauhati medical college hospital in the presence of an AIIMS Guwahati doctor as a large section of people alleged foul play in Zubeen's sudden death outside the country. According to the death certificate, issued by the Singaporean government, Zubeen died due to drowning, but both of his postmortem reports are yet to be made public.

Meanwhile, Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, while asking both Mahanta and Sharma to appear before the CID officials in Guwahati by 6 October, revealed that lookout notices were issued against both through Interpol so that they cannot flee to foreign countries. He has written to the chief justice of Gauhati High Court for setting up a judicial commission headed by a sitting judge to ensure transparency in the police investigation. The SIT members recently raided the residents of Mahanta and Sharma in the city and seized a number of articles. Moreover, the CID issued urgent notices to people who were 'present or aware of the events' leading to Zubeen's death in Singapore to appear. Eight non-resident Assamese professionals, who accompanied Zubeen in Singapore sea outings on the fateful day, have also been asked to appear before its officers within 10 days.

Lately, Zubeen's wife Garima Saikia Garg along with sister Palme Borthakur and paternal uncle Manoj Borthakur approached the police for probing the mysterious circumstances surrounding his death and also financial irregularities involved with the case. The complaint named Mahanta & Sharma and all individuals (including the non-residents Indians in Singapore) engaged in his trip. Breaking silence after many days, Singapore's Assam association stated that Zubeen went on a yacht trip to Saint John island along with some of its members. Expressing profound grief at his untimely demise, the association asserted that some of their members were assisting the investigating authorities in the probe and hence it was not permitted to make a public comment on the issue until the investigation process is over. In Assam, the lawyers' association appealed to its members not to represent individuals accused in the death of Zubeen under mysterious circumstances that have 'given rise to suspicion, mystery and a sense of conspiracy'. It would be a historic mistake for the legal fraternity to allow their conscience to defend the accused, said a statement.

Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi alleged that negligence of some individuals led to Zubeen's death and hence the deputy leader of the opposition in Lok Sabha, the upper house of Indian Parliament, demanded a transparent probe into the incident. The opposition leader in Assam legislative assembly, Debabrata Saikia has raised voice for a probe under the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and he has already sent a letter to President Droupadi Murmu requesting her intervention over the matter. A number of civil society groups including All Assam Students' Union continue demanding a thorough investigation into Zubeen's death, following which CM Sarma consented, if necessity arises (as the place of occurrence of the incident was outside India), to handover the case to the CBI. The government also restricted Mahanta from organizing any event/function/festival in Assam and holding back all kinds of financial support to his companies. With more to it, a PIL has been filed at Gauhati HC by Aabhijeet Sharma and Palash Ranjan Baruah, demanding an authentic probe into Zubeen's death and other relevant irregularities, which will be heard on 10 November next.

"Ya Ali Fever" | Zubeen Gair

Music Bites



Nava Thakuria

Senior journalist based in Guwahati.

BY NAVA THAKURIA

Assam flood situation slightly improves, death toll rises to 66

India: Debating the Passport Issue, Inviting a Nationwide NRC

Throwing light on a nationwide NRC

PEC Urges Myanmar Junta to Lift Curbs on Media After More Outlets Lose Licences

Penning Bhupen-da's melodious journey

ON THIS DAY

AJYCP protests against Lower Subansiri hydropower project

School reopening in the state

UPPL ready for election

Physical assault on magistrate in Kokrajhar

Peace Conversations in Assam

RELATED

Statue of first Bodo engineer Haliram Brahma installed at Bodoland University

Illegal earth excavation alleged along Namti River in Nazira

Cattle theft in Geleki: One arrested, two escape

Shyntor Festival to return to Shyntorbulia in December

Third citizens' convention in Nazira calls for scientific probe into July 19 floods
