



# KRC TIMES

## STAY-ENRICHED



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### PERSPECTIVE

The faster you move, the more paths appear. Momentum is the currency of new opportunities.

Meghalaya filmmaker's 'Rimdogittanga' wins national film award for best Garo feature

SHILLONG

President Droupadi Murmu, on September 23, presented the 71st National Film Awards in New Delhi, where filmmaker Dominic Megam Sangma's Rimdogittanga was named Best Garo Film.

Produced by Anna Films, Uncombed Buddha, and Joicy Studio, the feature explores rural life through folklore, fear, and prophecy, seen from the eyes of a 10-year-old boy.

The award carries the Rajat Kamal and a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh for both director and producer.

The ceremony also honoured actor Mohanlal with the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award for 2023. President Murmu praised him as an artist who has convincingly portrayed "the softest of emotions and the harshest of realities," calling him a "Complete Actor."

Highlighting the growing space for women-centric cinema, the President commended filmmakers whose stories addressed patriarchy, poverty, prejudice, and resilience. She noted the range of narratives, from mothers shaping values to women confronting social stereotypes and inequality.

This year's awards saw 332 entries in feature films, 115 in non-feature films, along with 27 books and 16 critics' submissions, underscoring the diversity of Indian cinema.

### WHO SAID WHAT



Deepest condolences on the sad demise of the Grand Mufti of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, His Eminence Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdullah bin Mohammed Al AlSheikh. Our thoughts and prayers are with the Kingdom and its people in this moment of grief. ~ Narendra Modi, PM Modi, India

## Assam Severs Links with Shyamkanu Mahanta, Imposes Ban on Public Events

GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced a complete ban on Shyamkanu Mahanta and associated organisations from conducting events in Assam, marking the state government's strongest action yet in connection with beloved singer Zubeen Garg's tragic death in Singapore.

"The State Government has decided to prohibit Shri Syamkanu Mahanta and any organisation associated with him from holding any functions or festivals within the State of Assam. Further, the State Government will not provide any financial grant, advertisement, or sponsorship to any event with which he is associated, either directly or indirectly," Sarma tweeted on September 24.

"The State Government will also request the Government of India not to extend any financial assistance or sponsorship to him in any manner," he added.

The sweeping restrictions come as multiple FIRs have been filed against Mahanta, chief organiser of the North East India Festival, and Sidharth Sar-



ma, Garg's manager, following the singer's death during a yacht outing in Singapore.

The development reflects mounting public anger across Assam, where Garg was revered not merely as an entertainer but as a cultural icon who gave voice to the people's aspirations. His sudden death has sparked intense scrutiny over the circumstances surrounding the Singapore trip and questions about safety protocols.

Mahanta had earlier claimed that Garg went on the yacht trip with lo-

cal Assamese community members, stating that festival organisers had no prior knowledge of the outing. This explanation has failed to satisfy public demands for accountability, with social media campaigns calling for justice and holding both Mahanta and Sarma morally responsible for the tragedy.

Just yesterday, Assam witnessed unprecedented scenes as the legendary singer was laid to rest with full state honours at Kamarkuchi NC village. True to his 2019 prophecy that "entire Assam has to sing this song" when referring to his masterpiece "Mayabini," the haunting melody played continuously during cremation ceremonies.

The funeral procession resembled a cultural pilgrimage, with Chief Minister Sarma, Union Minister Kiren Rijju, and countless celebrities joining ordinary citizens in bidding farewell. Garg's sister Palme Borthakur performed the sacred mukhagni ritual alongside his protégé Rahul Gautam, while his wife Garima Saikia Garg participated in the ceremonies amid Vedic hymns and ceremonial gun salutes.

## Manipur's Gloria Gangte named India's new ambassador to Norway



IMPHAL

The Ministry of External Affairs announced the appointment of Gloria Gangte, a seasoned diplomat from Manipur, as India's new Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway.

Gangte, a 2000-batch Indian Foreign Service officer, currently serves as India's High Commis-

sioner to Malta. Her appointment marks another significant milestone for the northeastern state of Manipur in India's diplomatic corps.

Originally from Churachandpur district in Manipur, Gangte cleared the prestigious UPSC civil services examination in 2000 and was allocated to the Indian Foreign Service.

Over her two-decade career, she has held diplomatic positions across multiple countries before her current posting in Malta.

The announcement drew praise from former Manipur Chief Minister, who congratulated Gangte on social media, describing her as an officer who "has served the nation with distinction." He expressed confidence in her ability to strengthen India-Norway relations in her new role.

Gangte's appointment comes at a time when India is expanding its diplomatic engagement with Nordic countries, particularly in areas of clean energy, technology cooperation, and Arctic research. Norway, as a major energy producer and technology innovator, represents an important partnership for India's developmental goals.

## Former Congress Leader Calls for Urgent Judicial Appointments to Clear Manipur Election Petitions



IMPHAL

Veteran politician and former Congress minister O Joy has drawn attention to the urgent need to fill vacancies in the Manipur High Court to ensure the timely disposal of pending election petitions. Speaking at a press conference

at Congress Bhavan, O Joy highlighted that a significant backlog of election-related cases from the 2022 Assembly polls remains unresolved due to an acute shortage of judges.

"The judiciary is crucial in a democratic system to uphold accountability and deliver justice. In Manipur, however, the lack of adequate judges has delayed many cases, undermining the sanctity of our Constitution and democratic framework," O Joy said.

Out of the 60 seats in the Manipur Legislative Assembly, 36 election petitions were filed following the 2022 polls. So far, only two cases have been resolved, leaving just two years for the current Assembly term.

O Joy emphasised that the Manipur High Court is supposed to have five judges, but the court has consistently functioned with fewer, often only three, which has slowed down the judicial process. He called upon the authorities to immediately fill the required posts so that pending election cases and other matters are addressed promptly.

While welcoming the recent appointment of the Chief Justice of the Manipur High Court, O Joy expressed hope that the Chief Justice, the Governor, and the Law Minister will take decisive steps to address the acute shortage of judges in the state.

## NSF Raises Alarm over Unlawful PRCs, Demands Strict Implementation of ILP



KOHIMA

The Inner Line Regulation Commission (NSF-ILRC) of the Naga Students' Federation has expressed serious concern over reports of Permanent Resident Certificates (PRCs) being issued to non-indigenous persons by certain Village Councils and Village Goan Buras.

In an official statement, the Commission clarified that while the issuance of Temporary Resident Certificates (TRCs) for administrative purposes may be permissible, the issuance of PRCs to non-indigenous individuals violates the

very essence of the Inner Line Pass (ILP) system. The Commission has urged all Village Councils and GBs engaged in such practices to immediately desist from continuing them.

The ILRC also condemned reports of unauthorised ILP checks conducted by certain individuals, stressing that only competent authorities are empowered to carry out such verifications. It termed such actions as "harassment of non-locals under the guise of enforcement" and called for their immediate halt.

Acknowledging the government's recent initiative, the

ILRC welcomed the launch of the Landowner-Tenant Registration App, developed by the Government of Nagaland to support ILP enforcement. The Commission highlighted that this move was in line with its earlier recommendation for a mandatory landlord-tenant registration system to ensure accountability and curb illegal practices.

Directing all federating units under the NSF, the Commission has instructed that all house owners renting premises to non-locals must compulsorily use the app, available at <https://police.government.gov.in>, for proper registration of tenants. It emphasised that strict implementation of this mechanism is crucial to strengthen the ILP framework and close enforcement gaps.

Further, the ILRC appealed to all stakeholders for full cooperation in implementing the system and urged the government to take stringent action against defaulters. Reaffirming its commitment, the Commission reiterated that it remains dedicated to safeguarding the rights and interests of the Naga people, while also ensuring fair and lawful treatment of non-Naga residents under the provisions of the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873.

## Assam to distribute Zubeen Garg's ashes through online application

GUWAHATI

The Assam government has announced that the ashes from the funeral pyre of legendary singer and cultural icon Zubeen Garg will be made available to organisations and individuals through an online application system.

Education and Cultural Affairs Minister Ranoo Pegu said the state's Cultural Department will oversee the process.

Addressing reporters at Kamarkuchi on the outskirts of Guwahati, where Garg was cremated with full state honours on Tuesday, Pegu said the government will create a simple portal to streamline the requests. "Organisations and institutions can apply to obtain ashes of their beloved artiste. If the re-



quests are still available after meeting institutional requests, individual appli-

cations will also be considered," Pegu stated. Garg, 52, passed away

on September 19 while swimming in the sea in Singapore. His mortal remains reached Assam on Monday, with lakhs of grieving admirers thronging the streets to bid farewell as the coffin made its way to the state capital. The final rites were performed at Kamarkuchi, where the government is now preparing to build a permanent memorial.

"The spot where the pyre was built will be secured starting tonight. Work on permanent demarcation and construction of a boundary wall will begin immediately," Pegu said. He added that a state police camp will also be set up at the Kamarkuchi memorial site to ensure security while keeping it open to the public for homage.

As announced by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma earlier, a portion of Garg's ashes will be taken to Jorhat, the town where he spent his formative years. The minister confirmed that rituals associated with the 13th day of demise will be performed there, and a memorial in Garg's name will also be constructed in Jorhat, with site selection underway.

For the people of Assam, Garg was not only a singer and composer but a cultural bridge whose music united generations. The government's move to allow organisations and individuals to preserve a part of his ashes seeks to honour the profound personal and collective bond the people shared, with their "Son of Assam."

## Rs 24,942 Cr Oju Hydroelectric Project in Arunachal gets environmental clearance



NEW DELHI

The Central government has granted environmental clearance to the Oju hydroelectric project in Arunachal Pradesh's Upper Subansiri district, paving the way for the construction of one of India's largest hydropower ventures in a geologically sensitive and strategically important region bordering China.

The project, to be developed by Oju Subansiri Hydro Power Corporation Pvt. Ltd., envisages generating 2,220 megawatts of electricity through a run-of-river scheme with daily peaking capability.

It involves a 100-metre-high concrete gravity dam, a 14.12 km headrace tun-

nel, and an underground powerhouse complex.

With an estimated cost of over Rs 24,942 crore, the dam is expected to produce 8,402 million units of electricity annually, according to the minutes of the meeting of the Environment Ministry's Expert Appraisal Committee held on September 12.

The Oju project is the largest in a series of dams proposed on the Subansiri River, often described as the lifeline of Assam, and has been in the pipeline for nearly two decades.

It has stirred concerns over its social and environmental consequences.

The entire 750 hectares required for the project is forest land, and though only nine families are listed for displacement, the impact on local tribal communities, who constitute nearly 98 per cent of the population in the area, is expected to be significant.

The public hearing held in September 2024 saw residents flag issues ranging from inadequate compensation to risks for fisheries, ecology, and sacred sites.

Many demanded that a fair share of the electricity generated be provided to the local population, according to the minutes of the meeting.



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## ENVIRONMENTAL CRIMES

The whole of South Asia is under attack, this time from nature and hundreds of persons have been killed, and property worth thousands of crores has been lost. In India, from Maharashtra to Rajasthan, from Bihar, to Himachal Pradesh and now J&K, all the regions of India are facing nature's fury that has led to massive human and monetary losses. J&K is the latest addition in this trail of death and destruction, not seen at such scale in many decades. For a poor UT like J&K, where we have to look for aid from Centre for every such tragedy, we are yet to see any futuristic approach for preventing such disasters, that have been mostly created by human beings. We had not recovered from the massive human tragedy at Chasoti in Kishtwar when another similar tragedy struck at the revered Trikuta hills, near Adh Kunwari, which religious place attracts millions from all across the globe. To make matters worse, the swollen Chenab and Tawi, two major rivers of Jammu region and scores of other small rivulets dotting the entire Jammu region caused mayhem at unprecedented scale. We will see a flurry of activity from politicians announcing doles out for the affected, some cosmetic repair work and then life will return to normal within a fortnight, when everyone will forget about the traumatic experiences undergone during these times and will hardly ponder as to what is required if such things are to be prevented in near or distant future. The rulers, the politicians from any political party, have hardly any knowledge about the term Environmental Crimes or the ways to curb the malaise and the bureaucrats are busy in other mundane things and hardly have any time for tackling crimes of such nature that have far-reaching consequences, ranging from the Ecological Harm, the Human health risks they pose, the economic disruptions these disasters cause and the security threat they pose, in fueling armed conflicts or assisting the enemy nations in making use of the conditions. The factors which contribute to majority of environmental crimes range from poor governance at various levels, from Central Government to UT of J&K Government, wide spread corruption, negligible or poor funding for environmental safe-guarding agencies, weak regulatory measures and poor Justice delivery system that has failed in punishing the environmental law violators (As mentioned in detail in my book; Misgoverned Kashmir, the Indian Bane). Environmental crimes in our country have often been viewed as low and last priority and the penalties, that have been provided for violating such laws are rarely to be seen at the ground level.

How many persons have been punished for capturing government lands and 'Khads', or convicted for violating laws for lifting minor minerals (stones and gravel) from the Khads of Jammu, especially from places near pillars of bridges, which activity earlier caused damage to two vital bridges in Kathua or many other places in the past. How many from the Government officials from Mining to Police to revenue department to private individuals, who changed the course of 'Sahar Khad', will be charged and punished will be an interesting aspect to be watched in near future. The massive damage and discomfort, such acts cause to millions of persons is hardly dealt with the kind of response they should be given and unless and until the cost factor is increased manifold for such law violators, you cannot expect willful law compliance.

Majority of environmental offences are committed with greed factor, and the costs should be manifold for such violations but here in our country, hardly anyone thinks about the crime theories that talk about the steps required before framing laws, especially those which deal with such aspects. Environment provides us everything for our sustenance to our survival and our protection; our health, food security and our economy is dependent upon it and yet we are so non serious about protecting it. Since most of environmental crimes are not victim specific, we often expect others to protest without getting involved in protesting against the violation of environmental laws. The same situation existed in most of the countries of the world a couple of years ago but a lot of nations have realized the gravity of the problem and they have risen in unison to tackle it and the same type of movement, at public level is required if we want our future generations are to survive.

In Indian philosophy, we say that there are three creations of nature, the interplay of which gives us pleasure or pain: Adhyatam – the category deals with things directly connected with or concerning Human beings, like Intellect, pride, desire, sense organs and body. (Adhibhot)-Those concerning other living beings like animals, birds, plants etc. (Adhidev)-Extra terrestrial bodies like Sun, planets, solar systems, and the rest of universe. We get three types of pleasures or pain out of these three above mentioned categories. Each such category can be further divided into two sub categories- pleasure or pain. Adhyatmik pleasure and pain-If your body is strong, healthy and active etc. you get body pleasure or happiness. If body is weak, afflicted with diseases and weak, we are in pain, sad, and in discomfort.

Adhibhoutik pleasure and pain: We get this pleasure from other living beings like milk from animals, riding horse, etc and pain from these things like when we get stung by snakes, scorpions, or get hurt by deadly sea animals or dangerous wild animals. Adhidevik pleasure and pain: We get pleasure from extra terrestrial bodies like sun energy, light, etc and pain like when flooding takes place, lightning strikes, earthquakes occur, etc. So, if humans want to lead pleasurable and peaceful lives, while acting and devising their plans, we have to keep in mind our foremost duty to protect the balance of these three creations and must make our leadership and all humans understand their duty for preserving the nature and let all understand that the ultimate aim of governance is to provide pleasure to all its subjects which is impossible to be achieved if we violate the laws of nature and for letting nature provide pleasure to all living creations, you will have to not only devise plans and strategies according to these factors but also implement them with the object of achieving the maximum for all creations, only then we will be able to live peacefully and pleasurable, in harmony with the forces of nature.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

I much prefer the sharpest criticism of a single intelligent man to the thoughtless approval of the masses. - Johannes Kepler

# TERRORISM AS A POLITICAL TOOL



DR. ABHIJIT JASROTHIA

Terrorism has left deep scars on Bharat's history, but its use as a political weapon is a story that hurts even more. While it's hard to pin down exactly when terrorism began in the world—maybe centuries ago with assassinations or rebellions—its role in Bharat's politics started not too long ago, in the 1980s. This is when we saw it being twisted to serve political goals, especially in Punjab and Kashmir, and even in attacks on our Parliament, the very heart of our democracy. This article looks at how terrorism was used by some leaders to hold on to power, often at the cost of innocent lives and the trust we place in our system. It's a story of betrayal, but also of courage from people like Khushwant Singh and L.K. Advani, who stood up for what was right. As we mark important moments like the 2001 Parliament attack, let's revisit these events not to fuel anger, but to stay alert and protect our nation's soul. As B.R. Ambedkar, the father of our Constitution, once said, "The Constitution is not just a legal document; it is a vehicle of life, and its spirit reflects the times we live in." Today, that spirit calls for strength and unity against those who misuse terror for their own ends.

The Pain of Punjab: When Politics Fueled Violence

In the early 1980s, Punjab became a battleground where terrorism was born out of political games. It started with genuine demands from farmers and concerns about Sikh identity, but these were hijacked by separatists, reportedly backed by Pakistan's ISI. What could have been peaceful protests turned into bombings, killings, and hatred between communities. The worst moment came on October 31, 1984, when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was assassinated. What followed was heartbreaking. Congress workers, egged on by some leaders, took to the streets in Delhi and other cities, targeting innocent Sikhs. Over 3,000 people were killed in just three days, with mobs using voter lists to find Sikh homes. Rajiv Gandhi, who became Prime Minister at a young age, said something that still stings: "When a big tree falls, the earth shakes." It was as if he was saying the violence was just a natural outcome, almost excusing those who carried it out.

But one man stood tall in this dark time—Khushwant Singh, a well-known writer and Rajya Sabha MP. He spoke out bravely in Parliament, criticising the Congress government. He said that while others were busy attacking innocents, it was the RSS volunteers who were helping the injured and saving lives. His words, bold and honest, remind us of what Rabindranath Tagore once said: "The nation's voice of anger changes its tune with time and shifting alliances." In Punjab, that tune divided people, leading to over 30,000 deaths in a decade of violence.

One chilling example from this time is the 1985 Air India Flight 182 bombing. Khalistani terrorist, possibly supported by the ISI, planted a bomb on the plane, killing all 329 people on board, mostly Canadian-Indians. Though this happened abroad, it was linked to Punjab's troubles, and some leaders in Bharat downplayed it to avoid upsetting some voters. As Bhagat Singh's famous words echo, "Inquilab Zindabad" (Long Live the Revolution), but in Punjab, that revolution was

twisted into a tool for votes.

Kashmir's Tragedy: Power Over People

If Punjab was the spark, Kashmir was where the fire raged. In the late 1980s, the Muslim United Front (MUF), a group of Islamist and separatist leaders, was winning elections in Jammu and Kashmir. This scared the National Conference, led by Farooq Abdullah, who didn't want to lose their grip on power. There were claims of election rigging—ballots tampered, results changed—and when MUF leaders appealed to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, he reportedly told Home Minister Buta Singh to follow the state government's orders. The excuse was that MUF's win would lead to "another Pakistan or Bangladesh."

This wasn't new. Jawaharlal Nehru had made a similar mistake decades earlier, ignoring warnings about Sheikh Abdullah and Article 370, only to later jail him for 14 years. Rajiv repeated this error, dismissing the democratic will of Kashmiris. MUF leaders like Yasin Malik, feeling betrayed, crossed over to Pakistan, becoming militants. The first group of Hizbul Mujahideen fighters included five National Conference workers, showing how politics pushed people toward violence.

The result was devastating. In 1990, over 300,000 Kashmiri Pandits were forced to flee their homes after targeted killings. More than 650 were murdered, with mosques used to announce hit lists. While this happened, some political leaders were reportedly relaxing abroad, leaving behind over 1.5 lakh unmarked graves in Kashmir—proof of lives lost in a conflict fueled by power games. Mahatma Gandhi's words ring true here: "You can chain me, you can destroy me, but you will never imprison my mind." The Pandits, living in camps across Bharat, carry that spirit, a reminder of the cost of political greed.

Then came the hijacking of IC-814 to Kandahar. Rubaiya Sayeed, daughter of Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed, was kidnapped by Yasin Malik's JKLF. The government gave in, releasing dangerous terrorists. But the story feels strange—why did Rubaiya later show sympathy for Malik, her so-called kidnapper? Article 370 tied the hands of security agencies, but the quick surrender raises questions about hidden motives. Later, Mufti's PDP joined hands with Congress, adding to the spoils.

Another painful moment was the 2000 Chhatisghopora massacre, where 36 Sikhs were killed by Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT). The attack was blamed on Pakistan, but some innocents were killed afterward to shift blame, showing how politics turned tragedy into a drama. Tagore's words fit here: "It is holding up gigantic selfishness as the one universal religion for all nations."

On X, people still express their pain. Journalist @ShefVaidya tweeted on January 19, 2023: "Kashmiri Pandits were driven out while Delhi looked away. 33 years later, we demand justice. Terrorism in Kashmir was ignored by the state. #JusticeForPandits." Another user, @KanchanGupta, posted on February 9, 2024: "Afzal Guru's hanging was delayed for votes. Kashmir heals only with truth. #BharatFirst."

The Attack on Democracy: Parliament 2001

Nothing shows the misuse of terrorism like the December 13, 2001, attack on our Parliament building in 2001, interpreted by neighbours as depicting Akhand Bharat, underscored the sensitivity of the issue. Demographics present another obstacle. A reunified South Asia would dramatically reshape the religious balance, with Muslims forming a much larger share of the population. Sceptics argue this could inflame sectarian divisions rather than heal them, given the violent legacy of Partition and the persistence of communal tensions. Critics also emphasise that, over the past 75 years, religious and cultural divides have deepened, making consensus-based unification highly unlikely.

using a fake Home Ministry car, attacked the heart of Bharat. Nine brave souls lost their lives—Constable Kamlesh Kumari, who first raised the alarm, ASI Nanak Chand, and others like gardeners and guards. They truly saved our Constitution. The author suggests we mark this day as "Constitution Garima Diwas" to honour them, and it's a call worth hearing. As Ambedkar said, "No matter how good a Constitution is, it fails if those running it are not good."

Afzal Guru, who helped plan the attack, arranged the fake car, much like Yasin Malik's alleged role in killing an Air Force officer in 1990. Convicted in 2002 and sentenced to death in 2005, Afzal's case dragged on under the UPA government. Mercy petitions piled up, even from unexpected people like AAP leader Atishi who was CM of Delhi, as claimed by MP Swati Maliwal from AAP. In 2006 India Today poll showed 78% of people wanted Afzal hanged, but the UPA seemed more worried about vote banks. L.K. Advani, the Opposition Leader, spoke firmly: "Why increase my security? Just hang him as the court ordered." His focus was clear—nation first. Shockingly, in 2006, the UPA sent Yasin Malik to Pakistan to meet Hafiz Saeed, the mastermind of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks. Reports even claim the then-PM thanked Malik, with a photo as proof.

The delay in justice had consequences. On September 7, 2011, a blast outside the Delhi High Court killed 11 people. Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami claimed it as revenge for Afzal's death sentence. The UPA's leaders stayed silent, unmoved. Imagine if we had a leader like Narendra Modi then—we would have seen a strong response, like Operation Sindoor, to defend our Constitution?

On X, @t\_d\_h\_nair wrote on December 13, 2023: "22 years since the Parliament attack. Afzal Guru's delay was politics, not justice. Honour Kamlesh Kumari and others. #ConstitutionGarimaDiwas." @BJP4India tweeted on February 9, 2024: "Afzal Guru's hanging upheld the law. UPA's delays put Bharat at risk. Nation first. #NoToTerrorPolitics."

Afzal Guru and JNU: A Dangerous Symptom

Afzal Guru's case became a political drama. Despite his conviction and a Supreme Court ruling, the UPA kept delaying his execution. Petitions came from human rights groups, and some claimed Afzal was a victim, ignoring his own writings praising Osama bin Laden. Prakash Javdekar echoed Advani: "Hang him; the nation comes first."

In 2016, JNU students, led by Kanhaiya Kumar, protested Afzal's hanging, chanting, "Afzal, we are sorry." Kumar later ran for elections in Bihar with CPI and in Delhi with Congress, but voters rejected him. As Sadhguru says, "The Nation is not just land—it is the people. Transform them, and we'll have a great Nation." Bihar's people, and Delhi's, showed they value Bharat above such politics.

The 2008 Mumbai 26/11 attacks, where LeT killed 166 people, showed UPA's weakness again. Despite proof of Pakistan's role, the response was mild. Compare this to Modi's 2019 Balakot strikes after the Pulwama attack, where 40 CRPF jawans died. That swift action sent a clear message—no mercy for terrorists.

The 2025 Pahalgam attack, where 26 tourists were killed by The Resistance Front, an LeT offshoot, shows the threat remains. Traces lead back to Pakistan. On X, @InsightGL tweeted on April 23, 2025: "Pahalgam attack: Pakistan's proxy war goes on. Time to crush terror networks. #BharatStrikesBack."

A Call to Protect Bharat's Soul

The misuse of terrorism has cost Bharat dearly—30,000 lives in Punjab, countless graves in Kashmir, and the heroes of Parliament and 26/11. Tagore warned, "Neither vague globalism nor blind nation-worship is the answer." True patriotism means justice, not excuses for those who support terror. The UPA's lows—delaying Afzal's hanging, sending Malik to meet Saeed—stand against the BJP's resolve. Scrapping Article 370 in 2019 cut terror incidents by 90%. Modi's belief—"Country first, no terrorist spared"—

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**On May 3, 2023, Meitei villages in Churachandpur, Kangpokpi, and Moreh were torched and razed to the ground by Kuki mobs led by armed militants. This video captures the heart-wrenching devastation, a testament to the unimaginable pain and injustice endured by the Meitei community. Nothing can justify the horrific terror attacks unleashed on innocent lives that day. Homes reduced to ashes, dreams shattered, and families torn apart; these scars run deep. No words can undo the horrors of May 3, but this voice of pain stands as a solemn reminder of the grave injustice inflicted upon the Meiteis.**

~ Sanjaoba, Research Scholar, Department for South-East Asian Studies, Manipur University.



## AKHAND BHARAT: DREAM AND DILEMMA

ATUL SEHGAL

The idea of Akhand Bharat—a united subcontinent—evokes both nostalgia for a shared past and controversy over its modern-day feasibility, rooted in ancient Bharatavarsh and revived during the freedom struggle as a counter to the two-nation theory. The idea of Akhand Bharat, or "United India," is one of the most evocative and contested concepts in South Asia. Rooted in ancient history and rekindled during the anti-colonial struggle, it envisions a subcontinental nation encompassing the territories of modern-day India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Tibet, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives. For some, it symbolises cultural continuity and civilisational grandeur; for others, it is a utopian dream with little chance of becoming reality. Between nostalgia and controversy lies a debate that blends history, politics, and geopolitics in equal measure. The concept of a unified cultural space called Bharatavarsh can be traced back to ancient Indian texts.

This vision was not always political in nature but rather civilisational—an acknowledgment of shared traditions, religions, and exchanges across the subcontinent. The Mauryan Empire under Chandragupta and Ashoka came closest to achieving political unity in the 3rd century BCE. Ashoka's reign, marked by both conquest and the spread of Buddhism, is often invoked as an early precedent for Akhand Bharat. Centuries later, during India's freedom struggle, the notion resurfaced in response to the demand for Partition. Leaders like Vinayak

Damodar Savarkar articulated Akhand Bharat as a counter-idea, rejecting the two-nation theory that ultimately shaped the 1947 division. Partition, however, redrew the map, birthing Pakistan and eventually Bangladesh, and institutionalising political fragmentation. For many, that moment extinguished the dream of unity. Yet organisations like the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) have kept the ideal alive, framing it as both a cultural memory and a political aspiration. To them, Akhand Bharat symbolises not merely geography but the recovery of a civilisational whole. The modern-day hurdles to Akhand Bharat are formidable. Foremost is the sovereignty of established nation-states. Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and others are independent countries with their own constitutions, national identities, and geopolitical orientations. Any attempt at annexation or absorption would constitute aggression under international law. The backlash over a mural in India's new Parliament building in 2023, interpreted by neighbours as depicting Akhand Bharat, underscored the sensitivity of the issue. Demographics present another obstacle. A reunified South Asia would dramatically reshape the religious balance, with Muslims forming a much larger share of the population. Sceptics argue this could inflame sectarian divisions rather than heal them, given the violent legacy of Partition and the persistence of communal tensions. Critics also emphasise that, over the past 75 years, religious and cultural divides have deepened, making consensus-based unification highly unlikely.

Yet this scepticism rests partly on political manipulation. Religious fault lines, critics suggest, are often exploited by political elites and foreign powers. On the ground, people across the region share customs, languages, cuisines, and music. Seen through this lens, civilisational unity remains intact, even if political unity appears distant. The geopolitical context adds further complexity. India and Pakistan's rivalry—entrenched by wars, terrorism, and the Kashmir dispute—makes even the thought of integration appear dangerous. Analysts caution that any push for forced reunification could destabilise the nuclearised region. However, proponents of Akhand Bharat counter that the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, the decline of cross-border terrorism, and India's military assertiveness—illustrated in later operations against Pakistan—have changed the balance of power. They argue that the nuclear threat is less of a deterrent than it once was, and that peaceful economic integration could bring shared prosperity. If political unification remains elusive, cultural and economic cooperation offers a more realistic path. Instead of seeing Akhand Bharat as a territorial project, it can be reimagined as a civilisational and cultural framework. South Asia's nations share more than borders: they are bound by cricket, cinema, literature, folklore, and cuisine. These shared elements can become the foundation for greater trust and regional harmony. Institutions like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), though underperforming, demonstrate the potential for collective

action on issues such as poverty alleviation, climate change, and trade. Strengthening such platforms could allow countries to pursue common goals without threatening sovereignty. Enhanced trade corridors, student exchange programmes, and cultural festivals could gradually weave together a sense of regional identity. Seen this way, Akhand Bharat is not about conquest but cooperation. It need not be imposed by force or framed in terms of territorial expansion. Rather, it can evolve organically through economic interdependence, cultural revival, and people-to-people connections. Over time, such integration might pave the way for closer political alignment, though that remains a long-term possibility rather than an immediate goal. Akhand Bharat remains an emotive ideal, oscillating between nostalgia and controversy. Politically, its realisation appears improbable in the near future, given entrenched national identities, religious divides, and international boundaries. Yet as a cultural and civilisational vision, it holds resonance. By shifting focus from annexation to cooperation, South Asia can reclaim aspects of its shared past while building a more peaceful and prosperous future. The challenge, then, is to separate myth from possibility. The dream of political reunification may never materialise in its literal form, but the essence of Akhand Bharat—a recognition of common heritage—can still inspire regional collaboration. The nations of South Asia, by embracing their shared roots and respecting their differences, can turn division into dialogue and rivalry into partnership.

# Tripura Assembly faces heated argument over royal family and Opposition's absence at PM Modi's temple event

AGARTALA

A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated development projects at the Mata Tripurasundari Temple Complex, on Tuesday, September 23 the Congress and ruling alliance partner Tipra Motha Party raised a series of allegations, accusing the government of not inviting the opposition or any members of the royal family.

On Tuesday, during the second day of the Tripura Legislative Assembly, Tipra Motha Party MLA Pathan Lal Jamatia said during Zero Hour that Monday was a historic day when PM Modi came to inaugurate the development works of the Tripura Sundari Temple.

"There is historic significance of the royal family, as even now in many temples, including the Tripura Sundari Temple, priests



perform puja in the name of Maharaja Pradyot Kishore Manikya Debbarma. The same happens in Durga Bari and the 14 Goddess Temple, but he was not invited to the program. I want to know why this happened," he said.

Another Tipra Motha MLA, Biswajit Kalai, echoed the same concerns, stating that no one from the Manikya dynasty was invited and that it hurts the sentiments of the Tiprasa community.

MLA Ranjit Debbarma also remarked that it was strange no royal family member was invited.

"When we feel proud of MBB Airport, it is unfortunate that no member of the royal family was invited yesterday. This will remain a black chapter in the state," said Ranjit.

Replying to the queries, Tripura Tourism Minister Sushanta Chowdhury informed the House that the list of dignitaries was con-

firmed by the PMO.

"In the list, our East Tripura MP Kriti Devi Debbarma, who is the elder sister of Pradyot, was included. Many leaders from the Tipra Motha Party were also present. As per protocol, nothing was decided at the state level. We had sent a list to the PMO, and they reviewed, approved, and sent it back to us. However, MP Kriti was absent as she is under treatment. Tipra Motha Party leaders were present. The opposition is trying to create a controversy, but people from many parts of the state came. I want to say, please do not take this personally — we have given respect to our alliance partners," he said.

Meanwhile, Tipra Motha Party MLA and Forest Minister Animesh Debbarma clarified that during a meeting, he had requested that a member of the royal family be invited. "It was discussed.

As far as I know, the PMO directed that the program be kept small in scale. I had requested the invitation of Raj Mata Bibhu Kumari Devi. Finally, it was decided to invite Kriti Devi Debbarma to represent the royal family," he said.

Meanwhile, Congress MLA Biraajit Sinha raised the issue that no one from the opposition was invited.

"Is the event and the temple only for the BJP?" he asked.

Concluding the matter, Tripura Power and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ratan Lal Nath said that everything was first fixed at the state level and then sent to the PMO.

"However, later everything was changed, and the final call was taken by the PMO. We do not want to hurt anyone's sentiments. If someone feels hurt, it is truly painful. We must be more careful in the coming days," he added.

## Manipur: RIMS services resume tomorrow as TAMOA temporarily halts strike, demands pending

IMPHAL

The Teachers' and Medical Officers' Association (TAMOA) has announced the temporary suspension of its ongoing agitation at the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Imphal. Hospital services are set to resume from 8:00 AM on Wednesday, 24 September.

The decision comes after TAMOA reviewed suggestions and opinions from the RIMS General Body, which included representatives from medical, nursing, non-teaching staff, resident doctors, and students. The association also examined written assurances provided by the authorities and deliberated on the hardships faced by patients due to the disruption of healthcare services.

While services resume, TAMOA emphasized that the suspension is interim and contingent upon the fulfillment of several demands, including the swift arrest of assailants, prompt communication to address misunderstandings between doctors and patients, cybercrime alerts and legal recourse against social media slander or threats, enhanced security measures with armed personnel at sensitive RIMS locations, and the establishment of a dedicated public relations cell.

The association stated that the situation will be reviewed after one week to ensure compliance with the Charter of Demands. Copies of the circular have been sent to the RIMS Director, Medical Superintendent, IMA MSB, and all associated staff and professional bodies affiliated with the institute.

## Tripura announces 3 per cent DA/DR hike ahead of Durga Puja



AGARTALA

In a festive boost for government employees and pensioners, Tripura Chief Minister Prof. Dr. Manik Saha on Tuesday announced a 3% increase in Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR),

effective from October 1, 2025, just ahead of Durga Puja.

Addressing the concluding session of the Tripura Legislative Assembly, Dr. Saha described the hike as a "special Durga Puja gift" and said the state government will allocate an additional Rs 125 crore to implement the raise, benefiting thousands across the state.

Highlighting the government's employee-friendly approach, he recalled that a 29% hike was implemented after assuming office and added, "Despite financial constraints, we felt it necessary to provide this relief. Even a 1% increase costs around Rs 100 crore. This step will significantly support employees during the festive season."

The announcement has been warmly welcomed, providing timely financial relief and festive cheer to government staff and pensioners across Tripura.

## ED attaches 8 Assam properties in Rs 3.10-Cr IAS Officers' housing scam

GUWAHATI

The Guwahati Zonal Office of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached properties valued at Rs 94.22 lakh in connection with a high-profile land fraud case involving the All India Services Officers Co-operative Group Housing Society in Assam.

The central agency, on Tuesday, said that it had provisionally attached eight immovable properties belonging to Rajendra Nath under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002.

The attached assets include plots of land in Kukurmara, Jogipara, Barhanti Maniari, Bangara, Kawaiamari and Rampur villages in Assam. "Further investigation into the matter is under progress," the agency said.

The action follows ongoing investigations into alleged mis-



appropriation of funds meant for a housing project for IAS, IPS and IFS officers.

The ED has also filed a prosecution complaint against two accused, Sautik Goswami and Rajendra Nath, though cognisance of the complaint is yet to be taken by the court.

The case originated from an FIR registered at Basistha Police Station in Guwahati against

Goswami, Nath and others.

According to the FIR, the Officers Society had paid an advance of Rs 3.60 crore to Goswami for the acquisition of 86 bighas of land intended for developing a residential colony.

However, the land was never handed over, and only Rs 50 lakh was refunded to the cooperative housing society.

The remaining Rs 3.10 crore was allegedly misappropriated, which the ED has identified as "proceeds of crime".

Investigators said that Goswami had entered into a private arrangement with Nath for procuring land for the cooperative housing society.

The probe revealed that substantial cash payments were made to Nath, corroborated by seized money receipts and statements recorded under PMLA.

The ED added that following the fraud, Nath purchased several properties between 2016 and 2023 that could not be explained as proceeds of any legitimate income. The case has drawn attention as it involves a cooperative housing society formed by senior civil servants, including members of the IAS, IPS and IFS, highlighting the scale of the alleged conspiracy and misuse of public trust.

## Meghalaya: 14-year-old girl found dead in West Khasi Hills, second case involving minors in a week

SHILLONG

The body of 14-year-old Iwanpynkmen Nongsiej, missing since September 20, was discovered on the afternoon of September 23 in a forested area near her home in Mawlyngkhar, West Khasi Hills.

Villagers collecting leaves in the area stumbled upon her remains, which were found in a decomposed state hanging from a tree.

Local headman Ioannis Lyngdoh confirmed that the body was later taken to Civil Hospital, Nongstoin, for post-mortem examination and further investigation.

Authorities have not ruled out foul play, and the case has sparked growing unease among residents, who are still reeling from a string of distressing incidents involving children in the state.



The discovery comes just days after another case involving a minor shook Shillong. On

September 15, the body of four-year-old Insaphira Lyngdoh Mawnai was recovered from an under-construc-

tion building in Nongrah Nonglum. After three days of investigation, police identified a 13-year-old boy, a neighbour of the victim, as the prime suspect.

East Khasi Hills Superintendent of Police Vivek Syiem said the boy confessed to accidentally causing Insaphira's death after slipping into a water-filled pit and pulling her in. The post-mortem confirmed drowning as the cause of death, with no signs of assault or external injuries.

What has unsettled the community further is the boy's initial behaviour: he joined search parties, gave false leads about masked men and a vehicle, and concealed his role in the tragedy. He is currently in a juvenile home and will face proceedings before the Juvenile Justice Board, while the Special Investigation Team continues to examine the evidence.

## 'Sikkim has zero tolerance for threats': CM Tamang stresses on unity, warns against unrest

GANGTOK

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang on September 23 made it clear that his government will not tolerate any activity that threatens national security, following opposition calls for a "Nepal-style movement" to oust his administration.

Addressing a public event in Gangtok, Tamang said: "Our government has zero tolerance for threats to national security." He emphasised that while constructive criticism and democratic dissent are welcome, any attempt to incite violence or disrupt harmony will be dealt with firmly under the law.

Marking Sikkim's 50 years of statehood, the chief minister highlighted the state's strategic importance.

"This occasion is not only a reflection of how the people of Sikkim cherish their identity as proud Indians, but it is also a reminder of how this small Himalayan state has, with peace and dignity, contributed to the nation by safeguarding the Union through its vital geo-

political position," he said.

Sikkim shares borders with China, Bhutan and Nepal, making its stability crucial to India's security. Tamang noted that state institutions will act swiftly against sedition, incitement or any effort to disturb public order. "Any activity that seeks to foment unrest, undermine national decisions, or endanger public safety will be addressed decisively and within the full scope of the law," he added.

He also underlined the government's initiatives to strengthen trust between people and institutions, saying such efforts build resilience against "forces that seek to harm our collective harmony."

Calling on political leaders, civil society and citizens to uphold a "shared responsibility," Tamang said dialogue and lawful protest are part of democracy, but violence and intimidation have no place in Sikkim's future.

"The people of Sikkim have time and again rejected the violence, intimidation, or attempts to exploit fear and will continue to do so in future," he said.

# HELP Society Joins as Partner for North East Integration Rally 2026

IMPHAL

Helping Everyone Live and Prosper (HELP) Society has confirmed its partnership in the upcoming North East Integration Rally 2026, scheduled from January 4 to February 4, 2026.

In a letter addressed to Biswadeep Gupta, Managing Trustee of KRC Foundation, HELP Society President Surojeet Das expressed gratitude for the invitation and confirmed the organization's enthusiastic participation.

As part of the collaboration, HELP Society will extend outreach support, mobilize volunteers, take part in events across Northeast India, and highlight its initiatives under the theme Peace, Progress, Prosperity. The organization has also shared its official logo for use in rally communications.



Das assured that HELP Society would give its full cooperation to ensure the rally's success, describing

the partnership as an important step in advancing unity and development in the region.

Helping Everyone Live and Prosper Society, known as HELP Society, is a registered non-profit dedicated to driving meaningful change in people's lives. Their work spans many areas—supporting communities, protecting the environment, promoting education, empowering women, strengthening livelihoods, improving healthcare, responding to disasters, and standing with those who are underserved.

HELP was built on a simple belief: every person deserves the chance to live with dignity, opportunity, and hope. Guided by this principle, the society focuses on empowering communities, advancing sustainability, and promoting equality. Over the years, they have grown into an organization that not only responds to immediate needs but also works to create lasting impact for a better and more inclusive future.

They believe real change begins with the community itself. That's why they engage people directly in identifying their needs and aspirations, making sure every initiative

reflects their reality. Their work is broad but connected, spanning education, health, livelihoods, and the environment, because progress in one area is tied to the others.

Sustainability and resilience are at the heart of their approach. They help communities prepare for and recover from challenges like natural disasters or economic setbacks, while also creating pathways for long-term growth.

They stand for gender equality, access to quality education, and essential services for those who are often left out, improving overall well-being in the process.

Partnerships, continuous evaluation, and the dedication of volunteers drive their efforts. Together, these elements allow them to not just deliver programmes, but to foster lasting transformation and help communities move toward a stronger, brighter future.

The organization will take the movement on climate change and integration to schools and colleges across Dima Hasao, engaging young people and encouraging them to participate in building a more united and sustainable future.

Quest!

There is a mathematical equation that can accurately determine whether a married couple will divorce with 90% accuracy.

## Bihar assembly polls will mark beginning of the end of Modi govt's 'corrupt rule': Kharge at CWC meeting



PATNA

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge on Wednesday said that the 2025 Bihar Assembly polls would mark the "beginning of the end" of the Modi government's "corrupt and incompetent rule."

Commenting on Bihar's political scenario at the CWC meeting held in Patna, Kharge highlighted the rift within the ruling NDA, saying the internal strife was now "out in the open."

He claimed that the BJP sees Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar as a liability. "The people of Bihar are rejecting the BJP's divisive agenda. They want development, not religious polarisation," he said.

Kharge slammed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP-led government, accusing them of failing the

country on both international and national fronts.

Addressing party leaders, Kharge said India is going through a deeply challenging period, with diplomatic missteps and domestic turmoil reflecting the "complete failure of governance" under the Modi regime.

"Our problems at the international level are the result of diplomatic failure of Narendra Modi and his government. The very friends whom the prime minister boasts about as 'my friends' are today putting India in numerous troubles," Kharge said.

"Today, when our voter list is being officially tampered with, it is essential that we hold our extended CWC meeting in Bihar, the mother of democracy, and reaffirm our pledge to protect this country's democracy and Constitution," the Congress

chief said.

Asserting that the foundation of democracy is fair and transparent elections, Kharge said serious questions are being raised today about the fairness and transparency of the Election Commission itself.

Instead of answering questions on the revelations from various states, the EC is demanding affidavits from us, Kharge said.

"Following the example of Bihar, a conspiracy is now being hatched across the country to remove the votes of millions of people," the Congress president said, referring to the Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls in Bihar.

"Vote theft means theft of rations, pensions, medicine, children's scholarships, and exam fees belonging to Dalits, tribals, backward classes, extremely backward classes, minorities, the weak, and the poor, he said. The 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' raised awareness among the people of Bihar, and they openly came out in support of Rahul Gandhi, he said.

He further pointed to the growing crises of unemployment, social polarisation, and the systematic weakening of constitutional institutions, accusing the Modi government of undermining democracy to protect its political interests.

### NEW YORK

India expects to increase its trade with the US in energy products in the years to come, and the country's energy security goals will have a significant element of US involvement, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has said.

"Clearly, the world recognizes that (energy security) is one area where we all have to work together.

India is a big player in the energy field. We are big importers of energy from across the world, including from the US," Goyal said here on Tuesday.

Goyal delivered the keynote address at an event, 'Energy Security in a Shifting Global Landscape: Building Resilient Energy Markets Across Borders' hosted by the Consulate General of India in New York, US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), and India's leading decarbonisation solutions provider, ReNew.

"We expect to increase our trade with the US on energy products in the years to come. And being close friends, natural partners, our energy security goals will have a very high element of US involvement, which will ensure price stability, diversified sources of energy for India and help us unlock limitless possibilities with the US on various fronts, energy and beyond," he said.

Goyal is leading a delegation for meetings in New York with the US side to achieve an early conclusion of a bilateral trade agreement.

Noting that September 22 is the commencement of Navratri, a very auspicious day of the Hindu calendar, he said it's said that on this day, "things are expected to turn for the better."

The dignitaries attending the event included Member of Parliament Anurag Thakur, Secretary in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas Pankaj Jain, USISPF CEO and President Mukesh Agni, ReNew co-founder Vaishali Nigam Sinha and ReNew Chairman and CEO Sumant Sinha.

# India expects to increase energy trade with US: Minister Piyush Goyal



Goyal stressed that another area where India and the US can work together and plan to work together is nuclear power.

"It's an area that we've been talking of for a long time. There were certain elements which needed to be set right. And I believe we are working in India to support private efforts on nuclear power." "I think the best way forward for all of us is to ensure resilient critical mineral supplies, see how we can diversify our sources to ensure that trade is not weaponized.

We have to work on creating infrastructure, particularly transmission grid infrastructure within countries and across borders," which can become the backbone of clean energy transition for different nations, he said.

"We all have to work very seriously

to align our regulatory frameworks to see how this cross-border energy can be guaranteed without any concerns of geopolitics overtaking the energy resilience or energy security," he said.

Goyal added that India continues to invest in nuclear power and looks to double "our nuclear power in the coming years through government intervention, but we do hope to take it on a much bigger scale.

It does have challenges related to price and energy costs, which will need to be addressed.

We'll have to make it more competitive," he said.

He underlined that collectively today, India is in a 'sweet spot' to expand its clean energy and over the next five years, we hope to grow from 250 gigawatt to 500 gigawatt.

Goyal referred to the European Union's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which, he said, has far-reaching implications.

"In fact, it could isolate the EU and hurt their economy because they would be like a small island and everybody else around them would be trading, whereas they would become price-competitive, they would actually cause inflation in their own economy," Goyal said, adding that they would cause their infrastructure and their cost of living to become unviable.

Their products would lose market share and exports.

"And at the same time, this green protectionism is like a trap in which, if somebody buries his head, he may find it very difficult to come out of the sand," Goyal said.

## INTERNATIONAL

# Trump says he now believes Ukraine can win back all territory lost to Russia with NATO's help

### UNITED NATIONS

President Donald Trump said Tuesday that he believed Ukraine could win back all territory lost to Russia, a dramatic shift from the U.S. leader's repeated calls for Kyiv to make concessions to end the war.

Trump posted on social media soon after meeting with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly gathering of world leaders.

"I think Ukraine, with the support of the European Union, is in a position to fight and WIN all of Ukraine back in its original form," Trump wrote. "With time, patience, and the financial support of Europe and, in particular, NATO, the original borders from where this War started, is very much an option."

The strengthened support from Trump, if it sticks, is a huge win for Zelenskyy, who has urged the American president to keep up the pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin to end his war. It was a departure from Trump's previous suggestions that Ukraine would never be able to reclaim all the territory that Russia has occupied since seizing the Crimean Peninsula in 2014.

That had disheartened Zelenskyy, Europeans and Ukrainians and called into question the U.S. commitment to U.N. principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity. But now, Trump's view of the battlefield coincides more with Ukraine's, Zelenskyy said.

"Trump is a game changer by himself," Zelenskyy told reporters after their meeting.

Trump needles Russia about war in Ukraine

Trump, going back to his 2024 campaign, insisted he would quickly end the war, but his peace efforts appear to have stalled following a diplomatic blitz last month, when he held a summit with Putin and a White House meeting with Zelenskyy and European allies.

Trump has acknowledged, including in his U.N. speech to world leaders, that he thought a resolution to this conflict would be "the easiest" because he has had a good relationship with Putin. Trump said he is open to imposing more sanctions on Russia and urged Europe to join in.

"Russia has been fighting aimlessly for three and a half years a War that should have taken a Real Military Power less than a week to win," Trump wrote on social media. "This is not distinguishing Russia. In fact, it is very much making them look like 'a paper tiger.'"

In his speech to the General Assembly, Trump said the war in Ukraine was making Russia "look bad" because it was "supposed to be a quick little skirmish."

"It shows you what leadership is, what bad leadership can do to a country," he said. "The only question now is how many lives will be needlessly lost on both sides."

Before meeting with Zelenskyy, Trump said the "biggest progress" toward ending the conflict "is that the Russian economy is terrible right now," Zelenskyy said he agreed with Trump's call for European nations to further halt imports of Russian oil and natural gas.

"We have great respect for the fight that Ukraine is putting up," Trump told Zelenskyy, who replied that he had "good news" from the battlefield.

How Trump's stance has shifted on Ukraine

Before his Alaska summit with Putin last month, Trump repeated that any resolution to the war would require "some land swapping."

In talks with Zelenskyy and Europeans just afterward, Trump said Putin reiterated that he wants the Donetsk and Luhansk regions that make up the Donbas, according to European officials. Days later, Zelenskyy and prominent European

leaders came to the White House.

Following those meetings, Trump announced he was arranging for direct talks between Putin and Zelenskyy. But Putin hasn't shown any interest in meeting with Zelenskyy and Moscow has only intensified its bombardment of Ukraine.

European leaders as well as American lawmakers, including some Republican allies of Trump, have urged the president to dial up stronger sanctions on Russia.

"In the event that Russia is not ready to make a deal to end the war, then the United States is fully prepared to impose a very strong round of powerful tariffs, which would stop the bloodshed, I believe, very quickly," Trump told the General Assembly.

However, he repeated his calls for Europe to "step it up" and stop buying Russian oil, the engine feeding Putin's war machine.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said before meeting with Trump that Europe would be imposing more sanctions and tariffs on Russia and that the bloc would be further reducing its imports of Russian energy.

Zelenskyy, speaking at a special U.N. Security Council session on Ukraine, also appealed for stronger U.S. pressure on Russia.

"Moscow fears America and always pays attention to it," said Zelenskyy, who has had strained ties with Trump in previous sit-downs and has previously faced White House accusations that he was partly to blame for Russia's invasion in 2022.

Russia denigrated the Security Council meeting as just the New York stop in the world tour of a "former actor," a reference to Zelenskyy.

"There is no added value for the establishment of peace in Ukraine generated from today's meeting," said Dmitry Polyanskiy, Russia's deputy ambassador to the U.N. "This will

merely become yet another shameful episode in the market of hypocrisy."

European leaders have supported Zelenskyy's diplomatic efforts, with some alarmed by the possibility that the war could spread beyond Ukraine as they are facing what they have called Russian provocations.

"I welcome the fact that the president of the United States believes in Ukraine's ability not only to hold the course" but to prevail, French President Emmanuel Macron said.

NATO allies will hold formal consultations at Estonia's request on Tuesday, after the Baltic country said three Russian fighter jets entered its airspace last week without authorization.

Trump said he would back NATO countries that choose to shoot down intruding Russian planes, but said direct U.S. involvement would depend on the circumstances.

The full-scale war, which began on Feb. 24, 2022, is taking a heavy toll on Ukrainian civilians. Russia said it shot down three dozen Ukrainian drones heading toward Moscow, while Ukraine said Russian missiles, drones and bombs killed at least two civilians.

The U.N. Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights also said this month that Ukrainian civilian casualties increased by 40% in the first eight months of this year compared with 2024, as Russia escalated its long-range missile and localized drone strikes.

A U.N. Human Rights Office report released Tuesday described the dire situation of thousands of civilians detained by Russia in areas of Ukraine it has captured.

"Russian authorities have subjected Ukrainian civilian detainees in occupied territory to torture and ill-treatment, including sexual violence, in a widespread and systematic manner," the report said.

## UN chief warns world leaders of 'an age of reckless disruption and relentless human suffering'

### UNITED NATIONS

With global peace and progress under siege, the United Nations chief challenged world leaders Tuesday to choose a future where the rule of law triumphs over raw power and where nations come together rather than scramble for self-interests.

Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said the U.N.'s founders faced the same questions 80 years ago, but he told today's world leaders at the opening of their annual gathering at the General Assembly that the choice of peace or war, law or lawlessness, cooperation or conflict, is "more urgent, more intertwined, more unforgiving."

"We have entered in an age of reckless disruption and relentless human suffering," he said in his annual "State of the World" speech. "The pillars of peace and progress are buckling under the weight of impunity, inequality and indifference."

But despite all the internal and external challenges facing the U.N., he and General Assembly President Annalena Baerbock pleaded with its members not to give up. "If we stop doing the right things, evil will prevail," Baerbock said in her opening remarks.

Looking broadly at the changing world, Guterres said it is becoming increasingly multipolar—certainly a nod to rising economic powers China and India but a slap to the U.S. insistence on superpower status. The U.N. chief said a world of many powers can be more diverse and dynamic but warned that without international cooperation and effective global institutions there can be "chaos."

President Donald Trump insisted in a nearly hour-long speech that the United States has the strongest borders, military, friendships "and the strongest spirit of any nation on the face of the earth." And he boasted, "This is indeed the golden age of America."

As for the United Nations, he told the packed assembly chamber that the 193-member world body failed to help him end and alleviate conflicts which he said many believe merit the Nobel Peace Prize.

"All they seem to do is write a really strongly worded letter," and not follow up, he said as he

portrayed the U.N. as an ineffectual institution, from its policies to even its escalators. One of them had stopped unexpectedly as he and first lady Melania Trump were riding toward the Assembly hall, and his teleprompter also wasn't working.

A U.N. official said the United Nations understands that someone from the president's party who ran ahead of him inadvertently triggered the stop mechanism on the escalator. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue, said the White House was operating the teleprompter for the president.

Trump reiterated that the U.N. has "tremendous, tremendous potential" but now delivers "empty words—and empty words don't solve war."

But his tone shifted at a meeting with Guterres soon after. "Our country is behind the United Nations 100%," Trump told the U.N. chief. "I may disagree with it sometimes, but I am so behind it because the potential for peace at this institution is great."

Guterres told the General Assembly that the first obligation of world leaders is to choose peace, and without naming any countries, he urged all parties—including those in the Assembly chamber—to stop supporting Sudan's warring parties.

He also didn't name Israel but used his strongest words against its actions in Gaza, saying the scale of death and destruction are the worst in his nearly nine years as secretary-general, and that "nothing can justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people."

While Guterres has repeatedly said only a court can determine whether Israel has committed genocide in Gaza, he referred to the case South Africa brought to the U.N.'s highest court under the genocide convention by name—and stressed its legally binding provisional measures, first and foremost to protect Palestinian civilians. Since the International Court of Justice issued that ruling in January 2024, Guterres said, killings have intensified, and famine has been declared in parts of Gaza. He said the court's measures "must be implemented—fully and immediately."

The U.N. also is facing financial cuts as the U.S. and some other nations pulled back funding or have yet to pay their dues. Guterres said aid cuts are "wreaking havoc," calling them "a death sentence for many."

With global support for a Palestinian state growing, Israel's devastating war in Gaza is taking center stage. But humanity's myriad conflicts, rising poverty and heating planet will also be in the spotlight.

Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan began his speech voicing regret at the absence of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, who was denied a visa by the United States.

He said he was standing at the assembly podium "for our Palestinian brothers and sisters whose voices are being silenced" while recognition of the state of Palestine is increasing in increasing. He thanked all countries that have done so and called on those that haven't to do so "as soon as possible."

Indonesia's President Prabowo Subianto also gave strong support to the Palestinians and warned the assembly that "Human folly, fueled by fear, racism, hatred, oppression and apartheid threatens our common future."

"Every day we witness suffering, genocide and a blatant disregard for international law and human decency," the head of the world's most populous Muslim nation said. "In the face of these challenges, we must not give up... We must draw closer, not drift further apart." The General Assembly's big week of meetings began Monday with events including a conference on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Secretary General Antonio Guterres addresses the 80th session of the United Nations General Assembly, Tuesday, Sept. 23, 2025, at UN headquarters. Turkish President Erdogan again refers to Kashmir issue in UNGA address

Tuesday's speakers also include Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, Jordan's King Abdullah II, French President Emmanuel Macron, South Korea's President Lee Jae Myung and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa.



# WHEN PRINCE OF MELODY DEPARTS



NAVA THAKURIA

The heartbreaking news surfaced from Singapore in multiple media outlets, which shocked the people of Assam in grief, but also in instant outrage 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 outrage with a vital question: why was Zubeen 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 Zubeen 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, organised 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 market-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 to Zubeen-related developments, and news channels telecast all important updates with true to the word 24 hours a day. Hundreds of thousands of Zubeen admirers poured onto 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 kilometres 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 his childhood days as Jiban Borthakur. He had two sisters, namely Jonkey (who died in a road accident while travelling 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



the Bollywood movie Gangster (2006). An animal lover, a philanthropist and versatile genius, Zubeen sang thousands of songs in multiple languages and could play several musical instruments. Awarded with various honours, the identity 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, a 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 the hospital. Although doctors provided treatment to him in the intensive care unit and monitored his condition closely, they could not revive him. Meanwhile, several 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 Dr Bhupen Hazarika (8 September 1926 - 5 November 2011), a widely acclaimed Assamese singer, musician, writer, filmmaker and an extraordinary public communicator, people of the eastern Indian subcontinent grieved in total with the loss of Zubeen.

Goodbye, prince of melody.....

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**10 JAN**  
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