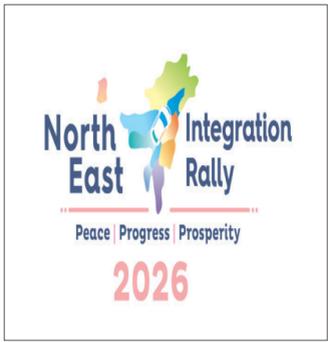




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PERSPECTIVE

"I am very proud to announce that Israel and Hamas have both signed off on the first Phase of our Peace Plan... BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS!"
- President Donald J. Trump

Gaurav Gogoi slams Assam CM over Zubeen Garg's death probe

GUWAHATI
Assam Pradesh Congress Committee president and MP Gaurav Gogoi, on October 9, said that the people of Assam are outraged over the unnatural death of late singer-actor Zubeen Garg and dissatisfied with the Chief Minister's "insensitive remarks" on the issue. Speaking at a Seva Dal programme in Bongaigaon, Gogoi said, "The people will give their answer in the 2026 Assembly elections. The BJP, sensing defeat, has already resorted to electoral malpractice."

He further stressed that the investigation into Zubeen Garg's death must be conducted in a fair and transparent manner so that all facts and evidence can be properly placed before the court.

Reaffirming unity within the party, Gogoi said the Assam Pradesh Congress and Pradesh Mahila Congress stand firmly together. "We in the Congress respect every mother of Assam," he added.

Earlier on October 7, Himanta Biswa Sarma launched a scathing attack on Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi, questioning his stance on Assamese identity and patriotism in light of the citizenship status of his children.

Speaking to the media, Sarma questioned Gogoi's credibility in commenting on matters concerning Assamese sentiment and national identity. "What justice will Gaurav Gogoi give to Zubeen? Zubeen is an Assamese and an Indian," the Chief Minister said, referring to the ongoing public discourse surrounding late singer-actor Zubeen Garg's case.

WHO SAID WHAT

Tomorrow the ADRE Grade III and Police SI results will come out to be followed by other results. Thousands of students from poor families will get a job in the most transparent manner.
~ Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam CM

'Human-Wildlife Co-existence,' a reminder of collective responsibility to safeguard Manipur's extraordinary biodiversity: Manipur Governor

Return of elephants after decades is 'a message of hope from nature itself': Ajay Kumar Bhalla



BISWADEEP GUPTA
IMPHAL: Governor of Manipur, Ajay Kumar Bhalla, today graced the grand finale of the 71st Wildlife Week Celebration 2025 at the City Convention Centre, Imphal. The event was organised by the Forest Department, Government of Manipur, under the theme 'Human-

Wildlife Co-existence'. Chief Secretary, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (PCCF), Principal Secretary (Forest, Environment & Climate Change), along with other dignitaries, also graced the occasion.

During the event, the Governor remotely released various wild animals back into their natural habitats. The animals included the Burmese Python, Bengal Slow Loris, Myanmar Box Turtle, and Leopard Cats. A project titled the Manipur Bear Conservation Project, in collaboration with the Wildlife Trust of India, was also launched. The Governor released a book titled 'Flight, Fur & Fangs - Encounters with the Wilderness of Manipur Forests' and launched the Forest Resources Assessment & Monitoring System (FRAMS), a web application developed in collaboration with NESAC (ISRO). The Governor also distributed incentive prizes to the winners of the painting competition and presented awards to various organisations — NGOs, CSOs, police, and other stakeholders — who have contributed to the conservation of wildlife.

Speaking at the event, Governor Bhalla said the 71st Wildlife Week Celebration 2025, held under the theme 'Human-Wildlife Co-existence', served as a reminder of the collective responsibility to safeguard Manipur's extraordinary biodiversity. Reflecting on the state's rich natural heritage — from the floating Keibul Lamjao National Park to the majestic Sangai deer and the recently sighted wild elephants in Kamjong District — the Governor noted that these

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Manipur BJP MLAs urge Sambit Patra to restore popular govt, warn of assembly dissolution

IMPHAL
In a significant political development, a delegation of around 25 BJP MLAs from Manipur, including former Chief Minister N. Biren Singh and the Speaker of the Manipur Legislative Assembly, met BJP North East Coordinator Sambit Patra in New Delhi on Tuesday evening, (October 7) pressing for the reinstatement of a popular government in the state at the earliest.



Sambit Patra, however, advised the legislators to first build consensus among Meitei, Naga, and Kuki MLAs to ensure stability

The meeting, held at Manipur Bhawan, saw the MLAs urging the central leadership to take immediate steps to restore an elected government. They reportedly conveyed that if the Centre is unable to form a government soon, the Assembly should be dissolved.

According to reliable sources, discussions centred on the possibility of reinstating a popular government before the expiry of the extended term of President's Rule, which was prolonged in August this year. While the exact timeline remains uncertain, the formation of a government is likely before the end of 2025, the sources said.

and inclusiveness before moving ahead with the restoration of an elected government.

Some MLAs expressed their dissatisfaction over not being able to meet Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP National President J.P. Nadda during their visit. A senior party leader from Manipur said that due to the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections, meetings with the top central leadership could not be scheduled.

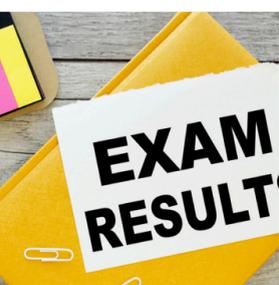
Patra reportedly assured the MLAs that they would get an opportunity to meet the party's senior leaders after the Bihar polls, indicating that further consultations may take place later this year.

Manipur has been under President's Rule since February 13, 2025, following the resignation of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh on February 9 amid the prolonged ethnic unrest in the state.

Notably, five BJP MLAs — Thokchom Radheshyam, Yumnam Radheshyam, S. Rajen, Panam Brojen, and Achab Uddin — did not attend Tuesday's meeting.

Assam Direct Recruitment Grade III results to be announced on Oct 10 at 10:30 AM

GUWAHATI
The results of the Assam Direct Recruitment Examination (ADRE) for Grade III posts will be declared tomorrow, October 10, at 10:30 AM, as earlier assured by the state government.



The announcement marks a major step in the large-scale recruitment drive undertaken by the State Level Recruitment Commission (SLRC) to fill thousands of government vacancies across Assam.

Officials confirmed that candidates can check their results on the official websites — slrc3.sebaonline.org.

To access their results, candidates will need to log in using their application number and password or date of birth once the result link becomes active.

Download the result and take a printout for future reference.

The ADRE Grade III examination was conducted to recruit candidates for various clerical and technical positions in state government departments. The Grade IV results were declared earlier, and the publication

of Grade III results will now pave the way for the next stages of document verification and appointment procedures.

The state government had reiterated its commitment to ensuring a transparent, fair, and time-bound recruitment process under the supervision of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma. The declaration of results tomorrow will bring relief to lakhs of candidates who have been eagerly waiting since the completion of the written examinations.

BPF Back in Command: Hagrama Mohilary Leads First Session of Newly Formed BTC Government



KOKRAJHAR

The first assembly session of the newly formed Hagrama Mohilary-led Bodoland People's Front (BPF) government in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) was held today at the Council Assembly House, Bodofa Nwgr, Kokrajhar.

During the session, a total of 37 newly elected Members of the Council Legislative Assembly (MCLAs) took oath of office, including 28 from the BPF, five from the United People's Party Liberal (UPPL), and four from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), officially marking the commencement

of the new BTC government. BTC Chief Hagrama Mohilary and Deputy Chief Rihon Daimary were among those sworn in. The oath-taking ceremony was administered by Pro-tem Speaker Tridip Daimary.

Notably absent from the session were former BTC Chief Executive Member and UPPL president Pramod Boro, former BTC Executive Member Rakesh Brahma, and BJP leader Rekha Rani Das Boro.

The session signals a new political chapter in the Bodoland Territorial Council, with Hagrama Mohilary returning to power after nearly five years.

Assam veteran Rajen Gohain resigns from BJP, cites broken promises and policy failures

DIBRUGARH
Four-term Member of Parliament and former Union Minister Rajen Gohain on Thursday resigned from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), ending a 34-year-long association with the party he joined in 1991.

A key BJP figure closely linked to the RSS, Gohain represented Nowgong Lok Sabha constituency from 1999 to 2019 and served as Minister of State for Railways in 2016.

Following his resignation, the 74-year-old veteran launched a sharp critique of the party and the state government, citing a series of "broken promises" to Assam's indigenous communities.

"While talking about ethnicity and homeland, the BJP allowed outsiders to settle at the expense of the indigenous Assamese people's land and resources," Gohain said, expressing deep disillusionment with the party's policies.

He also criticized the handling of illegal immigration, a core issue in BJP's electoral campaigns. "The government, which promised that after May 16, 2014, there would not be a single Bangladeshi in Assam, is continuously bringing in Bangladeshis through new tactics," he alleged.

Another major point of con-



tenion for Gohain was the delay in granting Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to six indigenous communities of Assam. He also voiced grievances regarding the party's treatment of its grassroots workers. "For not giving due respect to the lifelong dedicated workers who sacrificed their youth to advance the party, even after the government was formed," he said.

Gohain further accused the state government of promoting nepotism and adopting policies that stifle local businesses.

"Imposing new rules that squeeze the livelihoods of local small businessmen while handing over opportunities to large

outsider business groups is unacceptable," he stated.

He concluded with a strong warning about the communal polarization under BJP's governance. "The party is encouraging communal politics and dividing the centuries-old Assamese society," he charged.

Gohain's exit comes ahead of the Assam Assembly elections and is seen as a major blow to the BJP, as he was one of the principal architects of the party's growth in the state. Sources indicate that growing dissatisfaction with party functioning and policy directions prompted his decision to part ways.



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INDIA INCREASING ENGAGEMENT WITH AFGHANISTAN

The visit of the Taliban interim foreign minister, Amir Khan Muttaqi, to India this week will be closely watched across the region as it would bring India-Afghan relations, quietly nurtured over the years, into the open. In Jan this year, the Indian foreign secretary, Vikram Misri had met Muttaqi in Dubai. In May, there was a tele-conversation between Muttaqi and Jaishankar. Afghanistan had offered condolences for the Pahalgam attack. Other interactions too have occurred over the years.

The visit of Muttaqi to India has been under discussion for some time. The hold up was Muttaqi, like other Taliban leaders, has been under international sanctions since 2001. Sanction to travel has to be granted by the UNSC on a case-by-case basis. India negotiated the same.

Though India has not recognized the Taliban government, it has a technical mission in Kabul and has been providing aid to the country. Since the Taliban takeover, India has supplied over 50,000 tons of wheat alongside other food items. India was the first responder with aid post the Sept earthquake. It sent food, blankets, tents, hygiene kits, medical supplies and generators. India is exploiting the Chabahar port to export items to Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has been in global limelight in recent days. Trump has repeatedly mentioned that the Bagram air base, largely developed by the US, be handed back to them. He considers it crucial to monitor Chinese nuclear activities as also Iran. There were media reports in Apr of a US C-17 Globemaster aircraft, post switching off its transponders, landing in Bagram.

It was widely believed that the Taliban had permitted a US monitoring detachment to operate from there. However, in response to Trump's latest demand, an Afghan Government official mentioned, 'A deal over even an inch of Afghanistan's soil is not possible. We don't need it.' Hence, it appears that the US attempt to regain a foothold in Bagram, on the pretext of information sharing, was unsuccessful.

China too has been wooing Afghanistan for its own economic and security interests. Its major concern is of Uyghur freedom fighters exploiting Afghan territory to cause unrest in Xinjiang. It also seeks Afghanistan's untapped mineral wealth, expansion of the CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) into the country and through it to Central Asia. Being a regional player, China wants to expand its influence into Afghanistan.

Pakistan has always sought to dominate Afghanistan and consider it as its strategic depth against India. It had initially believed that the Taliban leadership would be subservient to it for support provided during the US led NATO occupation of Afghanistan. However, that did not happen. Today, Pakistan accuses Kabul of supporting the TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan) and Baloch freedom fighters, an act Afghanistan denies.

Last month PM Shehbaz Sharief visited Bannu in the northwestern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, post a major attack by the TTP which led to 19 dead and scores injured. He threatened Kabul but to no avail. Sharief stated, "Terrorists come from Afghanistan."

Aug was the worst month for terrorist attacks in Pakistan in over a decade. Currently, Pakistan is spreading the message that India and the Taliban are acting in cahoots against them, terming terrorists as 'Indian sponsored.'

In retaliation, there are regular air and drone strikes conducted by Pakistan on Afghan soil killing innocent civilians. Border clashes between the two nations is regular. Pakistan regularly shuts border crossings and exploits Afghanistan's dependency on the Karachi port as blackmail. Added has been Pakistan punishing Kabul by adopting a policy of expulsions. It has deported millions of Afghans living within the country for decades citing security concerns, impacting its influence.

Afghanistan, Pakistan and China have formed a trilateral which meets regularly. The sixth meeting of the trilateral was held in Aug this year in Kabul. Muttaqi had also traveled to Beijing previously for a similar meet. However, this has done little to stop the flow of terrorist attacks.

India's has been utilizing its soft power in Afghanistan as compared to brutal actions by Pakistan. Even during the Karzai regime, India had been supporting the country by funding multiple developmental projects, some of which were left incomplete. Completion of these will be one of the subjects under discussion in the forthcoming visit of Muttaqi.

Fearing close Pak-Taliban ties could impact its personnel in the embassy and consulates, India withdrew its diplomatic staff alongside NATO withdrawal. It took time and patience but India is back in the saddle in Kabul. Delhi has been encouraging Kabul to utilize the Chabahar port as an alternative, bypassing Karachi, thereby removing Pak pressure. In early 2024, Afghanistan offered to invest USD 35 Million in building a commercial and trade complex within the Chabahar Special Economic Zone.

As Islamabad-Kabul relations deteriorate, Delhi-Kabul relations gain ground. For Afghans, India is a friend and Pakistan an enemy. This is evident even in the sporting arena, where Afghans support Indian teams against Pakistan. India has also been providing education scholarships and medical visas to Afghans, adding to soft power.

For India, Afghanistan is essential for its trade with Central Asia as also in preventing anti-India terrorist groups exploiting the country for training camps. One growing area of concern for both nations is terrorism emanating from Pakistan. It is well known that Pakistan sponsors terrorist groups on Indian soil. It is also the nation backing ISIS operating in Afghanistan as also has ties with the anti-Taliban National Resistance Front and the Afghanistan freedom Front.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

The radical of one century is the conservative of the next. The radical invents the views. When he has worn them out, the conservative adopt.
- Mark Twain

GST 2.0 – The Thread of Change Weaving India's Textile Dreams into Reality

SHRI GIRIRAJ SINGH

July 1, 2017 witnessed India's boldest economic reform in decades. On that monsoon morning, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) replaced 17 different taxes and 13 cesses with a single unified framework, fundamentally reshaping the nation's fiscal architecture. This wasn't merely a tax reform, it was the beginning of India's audacious journey towards One Nation, One Tax, One Market.

Eight years later, the transformation has been nothing short of extraordinary. Tax collections have tripled from ₹7.19 lakh crore in 2017-2018 to a record three-fold increase of ₹22.08 lakh crore in 2024-2025. The taxpayer base has doubled from 65 lakh to 1.5 crore, drawing lakhs of small enterprises into the formal economy. Building on this foundation, India has now entered the Next Gen GST Era from 22 September 2025, streamlining the system into two slabs of 5% and 18%, with 40% reserved for luxury and demerit goods.

Households will save more with daily essentials, medicines and education supplies taxed at 0-5%, while farmers gain from reduced GST on tractors, tyres, pesticides and irrigation equipment that cut input costs and boost rural income. The auto sector also sees a major relief as GST on scooters and cars drops from 28% to 18%. Readymade garments now priced upto ₹2,500 (up from ₹1,000) attract 5% GST. I had a conversation with a college student and when asked about clothes, he said, "Festive shopping felt lighter on the pocket. With the same budget, I bought two trendy shirts instead of one. I don't know much about GST slabs but I know clothes are more affordable now." By contrast, luxury and demerit goods such as pan masala, tobacco, online gaming, luxury SUVs and casinos now fall under the 40% slab. This reform has promoted responsible consumption, the truest form of savings, while reinforcing our commitment to 'Fit India, Healthy India'.

And just as these reforms bring relief to families, farmers and industries, they also weave new strength into our textile sector. GST 2.0 paves the way for a complete transformation of the Textiles industry, which stands as the second largest employer after agriculture and a living example of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

GST 2.0 Powers the \$350 Billion Textile Dream
The textile industry in India is massive, shaping livelihoods and exports alike. Today, the industry size is \$179 billion and gives jobs to over 4.6 crore people, most of them women. The government now aims to almost double this size to \$350 billion by 2030, creating even more employment and income opportunities for families across the country.

India's organised domestic textile market is worth around \$142-145 billion and when we include the largely unorganized sector, it's closer to \$155-160 billion. With the introduction of Next-Gen GST reforms like tax rationalization and a fibre-neutral regime, manufacturers can now pass on savings directly to buyers. For consumers, especially middle-class families who are expected to make up 60% of India's targetable consumer base by 2047, these reforms will bring the greatest benefits. Together with lower-income groups, they are estimated to save \$8-10 billion every year making essential clothing more affordable while supporting local industry. These reforms go beyond lowering prices, they represent a true fashion democratization.

One of the biggest changes GST 2.0 brings for textiles is fixing the long-standing inverted duty structure that crippled the man-made fiber sector. Earlier, man-made fibers were taxed at 18%, yarn at 12% and fabrics at just 5%. This structure made raw materials costlier than finished products, blocking working capital and stopping new investments. GST 2.0 now has a uniform 5% tax across the man-made sector, creating a truly fiber-neutral ecosystem. For lakhs of MSMEs, which form nearly 80% of India's textile industry, this is a huge relief. It strengthens India's ambition to become a global hub for the man-made fiber sector and also enables the 22,000 million garment pieces produced annually to be manufactured with lower input costs, enhanced competitiveness and greater market demand. This reform will not only make clothes cheaper and boost exports but also strengthens the dream of Make in India and Atmanirbhar Bharat, a vision of growth that carries forward



both our Virasat and Vikas.

Take for example. Earlier in a women's stitching unit in Surat, the cost of man-made fibre and yarn was so high that their profit margins shrank and orders often shifted abroad. Now, with GST 2.0 reducing taxes to a uniform 5%, their input costs are lower, they can take more orders, pay fair wages and even expand their business. This is how a national reform directly touches the lives of ordinary workers and families.

The benefits don't stop there. With GST on commercial goods vehicles cut from 28% to 18% and logistics services from 12% to 5%, transport costs across the textile supply chain will come down. This directly supports the PM Gati Shakti and National Logistics Policy, while making Indian textile exports stronger in global markets. Together, GST 2.0 reforms empower every stage of the textile value chain, from fiber to finished garment to foreign markets, creating growth and jobs across the country.

The Aam Janta Effect – How Next Gen GST Reform Touches Every Life

The economic impact of GST 2.0 is felt in the everyday lives of ordinary families. Industry estimates project a direct consumption boost of nearly ₹1.98 lakh crore, with households saving around ₹48,000 crore annually due to reduced rates.

To put this into perspective, in 2014 under the UPA, a family spending ₹1 lakh a year on daily needs paid almost ₹25,000 in taxes. Today, after GST and GST 2.0, that same household pays only about ₹5,000 to ₹6,000. That is nearly ₹20,000 saved every year and money that goes back into children's education, better nutrition and family well-being. Combined with income tax relief, Indian families are projected to collectively save nearly ₹2.5 lakh crore annually. The impact is even more significant in smaller towns and villages, where nearly 63% of India's population resides.

During my recent visit to the markets in Begusarai, I saw the positive impact of the GST reforms. Retailers shared their happiness with the reduced rates, and I could feel the excitement among customers, who are increasingly coming out to shop this festive season. The rising footfall in the markets clearly shows how these reforms are creating a vibrant and positive economic environment which is a real benefit reaching both households and businesses alike.

Monthly GST collections which crossed ₹1.85 lakh crore in FY 2024-25 are now projected to consistently exceed ₹2 lakh crore. These reforms are not only easing the financial burden on citizens but will also fuel growth, with revenues continuing to rise even at lower rates. This is a rare

moment where reforms are both people-centric and fiscally sound, strengthening households while securing India's economic future.

The Social Fabric – Beyond Economics to Empowerment

GST 2.0's textile reforms are more than just economic changes, they are about inclusive growth, directly impacting 65 lakh weavers and artisans across India. This not only helps preserve India's rich cultural heritage but also supports the livelihoods of lakhs of women working in this sector.

By reducing GST on handloom, handicrafts and carpets from 12% to 5%, traditional products are now more competitive in both Indian and global markets. At the same time, lowering GST on sewing machines from 12% to 5% gives a direct push to India's women-led textile sector. As rural incomes and spending have more than doubled in the last decade, rising from ₹1,430 per month in 2011-12 to ₹4,122 in 2023-24. With GST 2.0, this rising purchasing power will directly fuel demand for Indian-made clothing, generating more work for weavers, tailors and garment workers and will generate a cycle of growth that benefits every section of society.

At a recent event, I met several SHG Didis who expressed their delight, noting that the Government has truly empowered them, first by turning them into Lakhpati Didis, and now through GST reforms making essential goods more affordable, along with income tax reforms lowering their tax burden. This Diwali, they said, promises to be a festival of real joy, with more gifts and celebrations for their families. These reforms are creating a ripple effect across the economy, boosting incomes and reducing the tax burden.

At a moment when India is striving for Atmanirbharta, the handloom and handicraft sector along with our SHG Didis stands as the soul of the Vocal for Local and Swadeshi movement. Our artisans and weavers are not just preserving traditions, they are the real backbone of India's march towards Atmanirbhar Bharat.

GST 2.0 & the road to Viksit Bharat 2047

As India enters the Amritkaal and looks toward 2047, GST 2.0 stands not merely as tax reform but as a growth strategy for Viksit Bharat. By simplifying slabs, easing household expenses, empowering farmers, supporting MSMEs, and revitalising labour-intensive industries like textiles, it strengthens both Ease of Living and Ease of Doing Business. The fibre-neutral GST is particularly transformative, unlocking new growth in man-made and natural textiles alike, positioning India to expand its global market

share, create millions of new jobs, and emerge as a true global leader in apparel and home furnishings.

As GST 2.0 has come into force this Navratri, it brings savings to households, relief to farmers, growth to businesses, and jobs to workers, a true early Diwali gift to every Indian. On behalf of the entire textile value chain, I extend heartfelt gratitude to Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji for his visionary leadership in steering India's indirect tax system toward simplicity, fairness, and growth. GST 2.0 is a milestone in our reform journey, and it lays the roadmap for India's march towards becoming a developed nation by 2047.

The author is Shri Giriraj Singh, Union Minister of Textiles, titled "GST 2.0 – The Thread of Change Weaving India's Textile Dreams into Reality".

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

TMC's Jungle Raj in Bengal!

BJP MP Khagen Murmu, a respected tribal leader and two-time MP from North Malda, was attacked by TMC goons while on his way to Nagrakata in Jalpaiguri's Dooars region to help with relief and rescue efforts after devastating rains, floods, and landslides. While Mamata Banerjee dances at her Kolkata Carnival, the TMC and state administration are missing in action. Those actually helping the people, BJP leaders and karyakartas, are being attacked for doing relief work. This is TMC's Bengal, where cruelty rules and compassion is punished.

~ Amit Malviya, Co-incharge West Bengal. Member National Executive, BJP



PAKISTAN'S WAR OPTION AND INDIA'S STRATEGIC RESPONSE

K N PANDITA, FATIMA BALOCH

Pakistan finds itself entangled on multiple fronts: careworn with deep internal unrest and mounting external pressure. The security situation in Balochistan has deteriorated sharply, with the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) regaining control over the central regions, including a stronghold in Zehri town in Khuzdar district. In response, the provincial government has imposed a blanket ban on public transport across Balochistan, citing escalating security threats as the justification.

The gravity of the crisis is underscored by remarks from former Chief Minister Jan Jamali, a pro-establishment figure, who lamented that even pro-Pakistan Baloch – often labelled as traitors by the insurgents – cannot travel safely in daylight through the Bolan bypass owing to frequent ambushes by BLA fighters. This reflects the broader challenge faced by the Pakistan Army, which continues to battle persistent insurgencies in both Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK).

Pakistan's foreign relations remain strained. Tensions with the Afghan Taliban-led government have intensified, with Islamabad accusing Kabul of providing a haven, military support, and operational backing to Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Pakistan is leveraging its ties with China, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and other Islamic countries to pressure the Afghan Taliban into acting against its ideologically ally, the TTP. This is the same organisation which fought alongside the Taliban for two decades against the occupational forces of the U.S. and NATO.

Simultaneously, Pakistan continues to blame India for supporting both the secular-nationalist BLA and the jihadist TTP – an allegation that underscores Islamabad's deepening strategic disquiet.

Following the ousting of the PTI government led by Imran Khan, the Pakistan Army has suffered a notable decline in public support in Punjab, a province where it traditionally enjoyed strong backing, particularly under the anti-India narrative. This erosion of trust has weakened the Army's ability to manage domestic politics and respond to internal and external threats.

To stave off its waning popularity, the Pakistan Army reportedly planned, abetted, and executed the Pahalgam attack in the Indian part of Kashmir through proxy forces, the tactics long employed to achieve strategic objectives. The Army capitalised on the Pahalgam incident and the Indo-Pakistan war of May 2025 to shift national focus away from daily ambushes and rising casualties in KPK and Balochistan, where its position remains increasingly untenable. In KPK, the TTP continues its campaign to dismantle the state and establish a Sharia-based regime, reminiscent of pre-2021 Afghanistan. Meanwhile, in Balochistan, secular and moderate nationalist fighters persist in their national liberation struggle, meaning independence of Balochistan from the stranglehold of the Punjabi-dominated Pakistan army. Despite tactical setbacks, such as publicly warning Pakistan of impending strikes, which allowed the Pakistan Air Force time to strategise its response, it achieved its core military objectives.

Political constraints prevented preemptive strikes on Pakistani military assets, resulting in some losses for the Indian side. Nevertheless, Indian officials acknowledged these setbacks while emphasising their strategic gains.

India formally withdrew from the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) and launched precision strikes on Pakistani cities, targeting terrorist infrastructure, airfields, and jet hangars. These operations caused her significant damage and casualties. Though currently paused, the campaign remains incomplete and may resume in response to future provocations.

India has officially designated the Pakistan Army as a participant in a proxy war. It declared that any future terrorist attack originating from Pakistani soil would be treated as an act of war – potentially triggering the continuation of Operation Sindoor. This declaration places the Pakistan military under constant alert and international scrutiny. At the same time, Saudi Arabia has placed itself in a tenuous situation by presuming that a Pakistani nuclear device would protect the kingdom, forgetting that the nuclear option is always double-edged.

While India's campaign has brought relative calm to Kashmir, Pakistan remains mired in high-intensity conflict and guerrilla warfare in Balochistan and KPK. Strategically, Pakistan has emerged from the conflict with no tangible gains. The invalidation of the IWT has severed a critical lifeline for water resources, and the threat of renewed Indian military action has curtailed cross-border operations. A co-relative phenomenon sprang in the context of the rising

crecendo of nationalist insurgency in turbulent POK. Islamabad felt that these insurgents were encouraged to intensify their struggle because the Pakistani army was helplessly engaged in facing the crisis in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. To counter this apprehension, the Pakistani army took two important steps simultaneously. The first was that it reinforced the border manpower by adding nearly a hundred thousand army men and the requisite armour on its side of the LoC, and secondly, it prompted anti-India elements like Turkey and Bangladesh to raise Kashmir in their presentations at the UN General Assembly sessions in Geneva. The purpose was to divert the attention of the POK unrest towards maligning India.

Pakistan now stands at a pivotal juncture with limited strategic options. It must choose between two stark paths: Escalation: Pursue decisive military conflict against India in the elusive hope of negotiating a new international framework to pressure India into halting support for the Baloch nationalist movement, reinstating the IWT, securing water resources, projecting national strength, and diverting domestic attention from internal unrest. Pakistan's recent defence agreement with Saudi Arabia may embolden its military posture, potentially dragging the broader Arab world into a regional war against India. This path appears increasingly likely, as Pakistan is actively pursuing defence agreements and diplomatic support from the United States and Arab nations.

Riniki Bhuyan Sharma files criminal defamation case against Akhil Gogoi over alleged false claims

GUWAHATI

Entrepreneur and wife of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sharma, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma, has filed a criminal defamation case against Rajiour Dal chief and Sibsagar MLA Akhil Gogoi, along with several others, over allegations of making false and derogatory statements against her and her company, Golden Threads of Assam.

The case, filed under CR Case No. 502/25 at the Chief Judicial Magistrate (CJM) Court, Guwahati, follows remarks made by Gogoi during a protest on September 30, 2025, where he demanded an inquiry into the mysterious death of singer Zubeen Garg in Singapore. Gogoi had allegedly accused Sharma



and her company of organizing an event at the North East Festival in Singapore.

Sharma's counsel, Advocate Kishor Dutta, clarified that the accusations were baseless and defamatory.

"During the protest, Mr. Gogoi made completely false and derogatory statements against my client. Golden Threads of Assam had no connection whatsoever with the North East Festival in Singapore. My client did not participate in or organize the event," Dutta stated.

He further added, "On the day of Zubeen

Garg's demise, my client and her husband, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sharma, personally visited Zubeen's residence in Kahlilpara, Guwahati, to offer their condolences to Garima Saikia Garg."

The defamation complaint also names Taufiquddin Ahmad, Director of Pratibimba Live, while Sharma has instructed her legal team to initiate further proceedings against AJP leader Lurin Jyoti Gogoi and others accused of circulating misinformation on social media. The next hearing in the case has been scheduled for October 30, 2025.

Meanwhile, in a statement posted on her official Facebook account, Riniki Bhuyan Sharma expressed disappointment over what she termed as "political

mudslinging." "In these difficult times, I prefer not to involve the name of someone I deeply admire and who has been a part of my journey as an entrepreneur. He contributed to the success of News Live through his music and support from the very beginning. It is disheartening to see his legacy being drawn into political controversies," she wrote. In a sharp yet composed response, Sharma added, "Through my organization, PEEPL, I am extending assistance to Akhil Gogoi offering him a first-class ticket to Singapore, five-star accommodation, and logistical support to gather evidence. Once he returns from his fact-finding mission, we shall meet in court on October 30 for the hearing. Let justice prevail."

Public hearing for 1,000 MW Naying Hydro Project in Arunachal to be held on Nov 12

ITANAGAR

The environmental public hearing for the proposed 1,000 MW Naying hydroelectric project in Arunachal Pradesh's Shi-Yomi district will be held on November 12, officials said on Wednesday.

According to a circular issued by Shi-Yomi Deputy Commissioner Tungee Loya, the public hearing will take place at the Yapik community hall, inviting local residents to express their views and concerns about the project.

The Naying project, to be developed by the North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO), is designed as a run-of-the-river scheme on the Siyom (Yomgo) river. The project will include the construction of a concrete dam, an underground powerhouse, and a tunnel. Construction work is expected to begin around 2028, with commissioning targeted for 2032.

Once completed, the hydroelectric project is expected to generate approximately 4,966.77 million units of electricity annually. The project had received clearance from the Central Electricity Authority in 2013, but work was delayed due to environmental and social concerns.

Authorities said the project requires the diversion of significant forest land and may lead to the loss of thousands of trees, raising apprehensions among local communities about its ecological and social implications.

On October 7, during the Cabinet Aapke Dwar programme at Miao in Changlang district, the state government announced plans to establish joint venture companies between NEEPCO and the Arunachal Pradesh Hydropower Corporation Limited (APHPL). The initiative aims to accelerate the state's hydropower mission under the "Decade of Hydro Power (2025-35)" plan, which seeks to add 10 GW of new capacity in alignment with India's net-zero targets.

Congress demands court-monitored probe into alleged Jal Jeevan Mission scam in Manipur

IMPHAL

The Congress alleged large-scale irregularities in the implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in Manipur and demanded a court-monitored investigation into what it described as a "huge scandal."

The party claimed that recurring discrepancies across districts indicate possible misuse of public funds, manipulation of data, and lack of monitoring by the implementing agencies. Addressing a press conference at the Congress headquarters in Imphal, Inner Manipur MP A Bimol Akojiam said, "I want the nation to know that a huge scandal is taking place under the Jal Jeevan Mission in Manipur." He said that while official figures suggest significant progress under the scheme, ground realities reveal a starkly different picture. Citing government data, Akojiam said that before JJM was launched in August 2019, only 26,000 rural households — about 5.74 percent — had tap water

connections.

The government claims that an additional 3,33,539 households have since been covered, bringing the total to 3,59,459 households, or 79.59 percent of the state's 4,51,619 rural households, as of July 28, 2025. Headed that Rs 1,212 crore has been spent on the project, with the Centre contributing Rs 1,078.82 crore and the state Rs 124.03 crore. However, during field visits to several villages including Toubul, Nanchou, Phubala, Patsoi Part-II, Kiyamgei, and Yurembam, Akojiam said not a single household reported having a functional tap water supply.

"These discrepancies are not isolated. They point to a systemic issue of data manipulation and fund misappropriation," Akojiam alleged, adding that similar complaints have emerged from Senapati, Chandel, and Ukhrul districts, where villages marked as "fully covered" under JJM reportedly lack operational infrastructure or regular water supply.

TMC will never take root in Tripura, people will reject them in 2026 in Bengal: Tripura BJP

AGARTALA

The Tripura BJP on Wednesday launched a scathing attack on the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC), claiming that the party will not take root in Tripura despite repeated attempts.

The BJP alleged that "infiltrators like them are not tolerated in Tripura."

Addressing a press conference today, BJP spokesperson Nabendu Bhattacharya said that BJP MLAs and MPs had come forward to help state for a party program, their own party makes arrangements for their travel. "They came for party work, so it is not the government's responsibility to make arrangements for their travel. The administration stopped them at the airport because it is responsible for ensuring their safety and the safety of the people of the state. Trinamool leaders have visited the state before, and at that time, the state witnessed several unpleasant

incidents. To prevent such incidents from happening again, the administration requested some time today to normalize the situation. But even then, they tried to muddy the waters," he said. Meanwhile, regarding the attack on the Trinamool Congress party office on Tuesday evening in Agartala, the BJP state spokesperson said that the protest was an expression of BJP's anger.

"But no vandalism was carried out by BJP supporters at the Trinamool party office yesterday. Only the flags and festoons outside were



thrown," he told reporters. BJP state secretary Devid Debbarma said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has also condemned the brutal attack on a senior BJP leader and MP Khagen Murmu in West Bengal. "Trinamool Congress had assured that it would restore democracy and come to power. But what they have done has destroyed not only the rights of the Janajati people but also the democracy and the future of West Bengal. Now, the same activities of the TMC have reached here, and they are performing a drama. The West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is doing the same. This hypocrisy knows no limits in West Bengal. When even an MP is not safe in Bengal, how can you say that the common people are safe? In the 2026 elections, the people are ready to reject the Trinamool Congress, and that is why a conspiracy has been hatched against BJP leaders," he added.

Mira Borthakur objects to sudden reconstitution of Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress Committee, terms move "demoralising"

GUWAHATI

Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress President Mira Borthakur Goswami has strongly objected to the sudden reconstitution of the Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress Committee, describing it as a unilateral and demoralising move carried out without consultation with her or the state leadership.

In a letter addressed to Assam Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) President Gaurav Gogoi, Borthakur Goswami expressed "deep sorrow and serious concern" over the development, calling it "strategically damaging" at a time when the state is preparing for crucial elections just five months away. "The recent change in the



committee of the Assam Pradesh Mahila Congress was carried out without any prior discussion with

me or local leadership," she wrote, warning that abrupt organisational decisions could harm party unity and morale at this critical juncture.

Questioning the reported reasoning behind the reconstitution, she asserted that membership strength alone cannot define leadership capability. "Ours is a political organisation built on ideology and commitment, not a network driven by membership targets," she stated.

Borthakur Goswami urged Gogoi to reconsider the decision and reinstate the previous committee, which, she noted, had "worked tirelessly at the grassroots" to strengthen the party's reach among women. She warned that ignoring the concerns of dedicated leaders

could trigger serious discontent among the organisation's backbone — its women workers.

She further cautioned that internal friction within the Mahila Congress could send a wrong political message, especially when the BJP is actively reaching out to women voters through welfare schemes. "We cannot afford to lose ground when unity and coordination are needed the most," she emphasised.

Calling for immediate intervention in the interest of the party's credibility and strength in Assam, the Mahila Congress chief also marked copies of her letter to senior AICC leaders Alka Lamba, K.C. Venugopal, Jitendra Singh, and Debabrata Saikia.

Congress leader files complaint against Assam CM over remarks questioning political opponents' birth

GUWAHATI

A Congress leader from Karbi Anglong has filed a police complaint against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sharma, accusing him of making statements that questioned whether opposition party workers were born from their mothers' wombs.

Charisma Rongpipi, Media Chairperson of the Karbi Anglong District Congress Committee and a member of the Scheduled Tribe community, lodged the complaint at Diphu Police Station on October 8. The complaint centres on remarks Sharma made during the launch of the Orunodoi 3.0 scheme at Khanapara on October 7. According to the complaint, while defending his government's welfare scheme against opposition criticism, the Chief Minister stated in Assamese: "I think sometime about the people in the Congress Party... that are they born from their mother's womb? ...If someone is born from their mother's womb... then showing respect to that mother will never be a crime, will never be wrong, will never be sin." Rongpipi, 42, argues in her detailed complaint that the remarks directly attacked the dignity of Scheduled Tribe women affiliated with the Congress party. "These extremely derogatory words of the accused person, which has been widely circulated, has reduced the sacred act of motherhood

in our ST community to a tool of political ridicule and casteist derogatory slur," the complaint states.

The document alleges the Chief Minister's comments have caused "immense personal distress, including sleeplessness, anxiety, and fear of community backlash" among tribal women Congress workers. The complaint cites what it describes as a pattern of similar conduct by Sharma, referencing a February 2022 incident involving remarks about Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and his mother Sonia Gandhi, where the Chief Minister allegedly asked: "Did we ever ask you proof of whether you are Rajiv Gandhi's son or not?" Multiple FIRs were filed across India following that incident, according to the complaint.

It also references statements made during the April-May 2025 panchayat election campaign, where Sharma allegedly claimed that under Congress rule, "women had to compromise their chastity" to secure government jobs.

The complaint invokes several legal provisions, including sections related to outraging the modesty of women, promoting enmity between groups, criminal intimidation, and provisions under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act for intentional insult and intimidation of ST members in public.

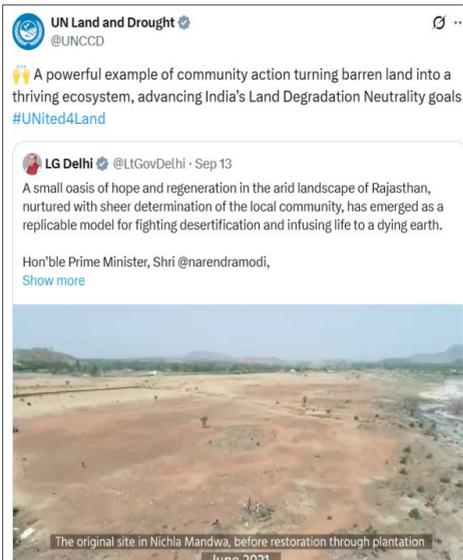
UN Body Hails KVIC's Bamboo-Based Green Revival of Rajasthan's Arid Lands

BISWADEEP GUPTA

IMPHAL .Last month, we covered a story of the transformation of arid land in Rajasthan, planting bamboo from Assam. The initiative began in 2021 under the leadership of V K Saxena, Lieutenant Governor, Delhi, who was then the Chairman, Khadi & Village Industries Commission (KVIC), and Prof (Dr) Sukamal Deb was then his Dy. CEO, KVIC, In-charge of the North East Region.

In the age of climate change and global warming, the importance of this innovative work acquire a wider recognition when the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) appreciated it in a post on X, terming it "a powerful example of community action turning barren land into a thriving ecosystem, advancing India's Land Degradation Neutrality goals." (@UNCCD) on X, <https://x.com/UNCCD/status/1970067035905531950?s=08>.

The UNCCD is a United Nations convention aimed at addressing de-



The original site in Nichla Mandwa, before restoration through plantation June 2021

addresses particularly the arid, semi-arid & dry sub-humid areas, called drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and people are found. This project fits well to achieve these objectives, as Nichla Mandwa village in the Udaipur district of Rajasthan is afflicted with one of the most vulnerable ecosystems and is inhabited by people coping with adverse climatic conditions, where villagers offered 25 acres of Gram Sabha land for rejuvenation. This is a classic example of community mobilisation for a cause.

The Convention obliges national governments to take measures to tackle the issue of desertification. The 2018 - 2030 Strategic Framework is a comprehensive international

commitment to attain Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN), focusing on having a bottom-up approach to achieve its goals by involving the local communities. The tweet exemplifies the relevance of the work by terming it as a powerful example of community action. India ratified the Convention to Combat Desertification, with the nodal ministry for the convention in India being the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, working on the theme, Restore Land, Sustain Future. India is a part of the international effort to bring 350 million hectares of the world's degraded and deforested land into restoration by 2030.

Saxena, whose brainchild is the project and was executed under his leadership, expresses his immense happiness for the recognition by a United Nations body, saying the credit goes to the committed team, who worked passionately over the phone with Prof. Sukamal Deb on October 2.

The tall and large bamboos flourishing on land, which for decades were considered arid, rekindle hope for humanity to live in an age of sustainable development, as Saxena's leadership is creating a living example (<https://x.com/ltgovdelhi/status/1966822726011961726?s=48>).

Quest!

One of the best things in life is seeing a smile on a persons face and knowing that you put it there.



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Don't misuse AI-based tools in Bihar poll campaigning: EC to parties



NEW DELHI

The Election Commission has warned political parties against misusing AI to create deepfakes or distort information in the Bihar assembly polls.

In a statement on Thursday, the poll authority also reminded parties of its instructions to prominently label AI-generated or synthetic content being shared for campaigning through their social media platforms or in the form of

advertisements.

Parties, star campaigners and candidates should prominently declare that the content is "AI-Generated", "Digitally Enhanced", or a "Synthetic Content".

It cautioned that a strict watch on social media posts is being kept to ensure that the election atmosphere is not vitiated.

"The Commission advised the parties against misuse of AI based tools to create deep fakes that distort information or propagate

misinformation over social media platforms emphasizing the need to uphold the integrity of the electoral process," it said.

Amid the last Lok Sabha elections, EC had come out with a set of directives for parties against misuse of artificial intelligence to prevent spread of misinformation.

Bihar goes to polls in two phases on November 6 and 11 with counting of votes on November 14.

Was cough syrup linked to child deaths exported to other countries: WHO to Indian authorities

NEW DELHI

The World Health Organisation has sought to know from Indian authorities whether the cough syrup linked to child deaths in the country was exported to other nations, sources said on Thursday.

They said the global health agency will take a call on issuing a 'Global Medical Products Alert' on the cough syrup, Coldrif, after receiving an official confirmation from authorities here.

The agency issues such alerts for substandard and contaminated medicines.

Five children from Madhya Pradesh are in a critical condition, while 20 have died due to kidney infections caused by the consumption of the "contaminated" cough syrup, containing Diethylene Glycol (DEG) and Ethylene Glycol (EG).

Besides, at least three children have allegedly died in Rajasthan after consuming cough syrup in different districts of the state.

"The World Health Organisation (WHO) on Wednesday has asked for a clarification on whether the cough syrup linked to children deaths in the country was exported to other countries as part of the routine process", the sources said.

The Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) on Wednesday had urged all state and UT drug controllers to ensure testing of raw materials and finished formulations of pharmaceutical products before releasing them in the market in the wake of children deaths allegedly due to consumption of contaminated cough syrup in Madhya Pradesh.

In an advisory, the DCGI said during recent inspections at manufacturing facilities and in the investigations of the drugs declared as 'Not



of Standard Quality', it was found that several manufacturers are not testing each batch of excipients and active ingredients for compliance with prescribed standards before use.

There have been recent reports of child deaths in Chhindwara in Madhya Pradesh, allegedly linked to contaminated cough syrups and concerns related to quality of these cough syrups, the advisory stated.

"During the inspections carried out at the manufacturing facilities and in the investigations of the drugs declared as Not of Standard Quality,

it was observed in the reports that the manufacturers are not carrying out testing of each batch of the excipients/inactive and active pharmaceutical ingredients for verification of compliance with the prescribed standards before using them in the manufacture of formulations and also in the finished products," the advisory dated October 7 said.

"All State/UT drug controllers are requested to take measures to ensure testing before the manufacture and release of the batch to the market by way of monitoring during inspections,

sensitising the manufacturers through circulars, etc. Further, it shall also be ensured that the manufacturers have robust vendor qualification system in place and use raw materials including excipients from reliable approved vendors only," the advisory said.

The Centre in 2023 had ordered pharma companies to mention warnings on the label and the package insert stating the fixed-dose combination (FDC) of chlorpheniramine maleate IP 2mg and phenylephrine HCl IP 5mg drop/ml "should not be used in children below four years of age".

INTERNATIONAL

Hamas, Israel agree to 'first phase' of Trump's Gaza peace plan

TELAVIV

Israel and Hamas on Thursday agreed to pause fighting in Gaza and secure the release of the remaining hostages in exchange for Palestinian prisoners, accepting key elements of a plan proposed by US President Donald Trump's administration.

The deal, which Palestinians have greeted with caution, marks a significant step towards ending a war that has killed tens of thousands of people and triggered a humanitarian crisis in the enclave.

The agreement, which follows a 20-point peace plan for Gaza announced last month by Trump, is to be signed Thursday in Egypt, and calls for Israel to release hundreds of Palestinian prisoners.

Under the deal, aid deliveries to Gaza are expected to surge after more than two years of war. The Israeli military said it was preparing to pull back troops from parts of Gaza as part of the agreement.

Trump's plan also calls for Hamas to be disarmed and for Gaza to be governed by a transitional authority headed by the US president himself, though this aspect remains unaddressed.

Hamas sources said the group would release 20 living hostages in exchange for nearly 2,000 Palestinian prisoners in the first phase of the deal, with the swap to take place within 72 hours of its implementation.

The timing of the implementation would be announced on Thursday, the sources added. Trump said he believed all hostages would "be coming back on Monday."

Under the plan, Israel would retain an open-ended military presence along Gaza's border with Israel, while an international force made up largely of troops from Arab and Muslim nations would oversee internal security. The US would

lead a major internationally funded reconstruction effort.

The proposal also outlines a potential future role for the Palestinian Authority—a move Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu opposes. The Authority, which governs parts of the West Bank, would first be required to undergo sweeping reforms that could take years to complete.

The plan remains vague on the prospect of a future Palestinian state, an idea Netanyahu and his government continue to reject.

A growing number of experts, including those commissioned by a UN body, have said that Israel's offensive in Gaza amounts to genocide. More than 67,000 Palestinians—mostly women and children—have been killed in Gaza and nearly 170,000 wounded, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

The United Nations and many independent experts consider its figures to be the most reliable estimate of wartime casualties. Gaza's civil defence agency reported several strikes on the territory after the announcement of the deal. Buildings that were destroyed during the Israeli ground and air operations stand in the northern Gaza Strip, as seen from southern Israel, Thursday, Oct. 9, 2025, following the announcement that Israel and Hamas have agreed to the first phase of a peace plan to pause the fighting.

In the Gaza Strip, where much of the territory lies in ruins, Palestinians have been desperate for a breakthrough. Thousands fleeing Israel's latest ground offensive in northern Gaza and Gaza City have set up makeshift tents along the beach in the central part of the territory, sometimes using blankets for shelter.

Ayman Saber, a Palestinian from Khan Younis, reacted to the ceasefire announcement by saying he plans to return to his home city and try to rebuild his house, which was destroyed last year by an Israeli strike.

"I will rebuild the house, we will rebuild Gaza," he said.

The announcement has sparked waves of joy in the besieged strip, much of which has been flattened by bombardment and most of whose residents have been displaced at least once over the past two years.

"Honestly, when I heard the news, I couldn't hold back. Tears of joy flowed. Two years of bombing, terror, destruction, loss, humiliation, and the constant feeling that we could die at any moment," displaced Palestinian Samer Joudeh told AFP.

"Now, we finally feel like we're getting a moment of respite."

In Khan Yunis in the south of the Gaza Strip, young people sang, danced and clapped, AFP footage showed.

The deal is being thrashed out in indirect negotiations behind closed doors in a conference centre in Sharm El-Sheikh, an Egyptian resort town on the Red Sea.

There was none of the pomp around the talks of previous deals agreed in Egypt, in a possible signal that the deeper issues in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are not being addressed.

Qatar said the deal was the "first phase of the Gaza ceasefire agreement, which will lead to ending the war, the release of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners, and the entry of aid".

The hostages are to be freed in exchange for 250 Palestinians sentenced to life imprisonment and 1,700 others arrested by Israel since the war began, added the source within Hamas.

Buildings that were destroyed during the Israeli ground and air operations stand in the northern Gaza Strip, as seen from

southern Israel, Thursday, Oct. 9, 2025, following the announcement that Israel and Hamas have agreed to the first phase of a peace plan to pause the fighting.

Netanyahu said he would bring the hostages home "with God's help", and an official source added the premier's cabinet would meet Thursday to approve the deal. Trump said earlier that he may travel to the Middle East this week as a deal was "very close."

The fast-paced developments came after US Secretary of State Marco Rubio interrupted an event at the White House on Wednesday and hand Trump an urgent note about the progress of the negotiations in Egypt.

"I may go there sometime toward the end of the week, maybe on Sunday," Trump said, adding that he was "most likely" to turn up in Egypt but would also consider going to Gaza.

Hamas has submitted a list of Palestinian prisoners it wants released from Israeli jails in the first phase of the truce.

In exchange, Hamas is to free the remaining 47 hostages, both alive and dead, who were seized in October 2023.

In Egypt, the talks were taking place under the shadow of the second anniversary of the Hamas attack, which resulted in the deaths of 1,219 people, according to official Israeli figures. Militants also took 251 people hostage into Gaza, where 47 remain, including 25 Israeli military says are dead.

Protests have erupted in countries around the globe in recent weeks, and a UN probe last month accused Israel of genocide, a charge the government rejected as "distorted and false."

Hamas has also been accused of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Chances of war with India are real, says Pakistan's defence minister



ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has warned that "chances of war with India are real" and claimed that his country would achieve even bigger success in the case of any armed conflict in future.

Asif made the remarks in an interview with Samaa TV on Tuesday, where the anchor asked him about the recent statements by the Indian political and military leaders.

The minister said that there was a threat of armed confrontation and Pakistan was keeping its guard and watching the situation.

"Chances of war with India are real," Asif said in response to a question.

He added that Pakistan would likely achieve more favourable results in the event of a war with India.

"I do not want escalation, but the risks are real, and I am not denying that. If it comes to war, God willing, we will achieve a better result than before," Asif said.

He said that Pakistan has more supporters and allies than it had six months ago, while claiming that India had even lost the support of the countries which were on its side before the May conflict.

If they try again, score will be far better: Pakistan Defence Minister 'warns' India against future conflict

However, he refrained from naming any country in the category.

Asif also claimed that India was never a united nation, except briefly under Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, and that Pakistan was created in the name of Allah and stood united during the May confrontation despite several internal issues.

"At home, we argue and compete. In a fight with India, we come together," he said.

His remarks come just days after he made similar threats following statements from Indian Army chief Gen Upendra Dwivedi, who warned Pakistan to stop backing state-sponsored terrorism if it wants to exist on the world

map. Separately, Air Chief Marshal A P Singh on Friday said at least a dozen Pakistani military aircraft, including US-origin F-16 jets, were destroyed or damaged in Indian strikes during Operation Sindoor.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, speaking at an event in Hyderabad on Friday, asserted that India can cross any border whenever necessary to protect citizens and safeguard its unity and integrity.

In response to the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, India launched Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting terror infrastructure in territories controlled by Pakistan.

The strikes triggered four days of intense clashes that ended with an understanding on stopping the military actions on May 10.

India has been maintaining that Pakistan pleaded for ending the hostilities in May after the Indian military pounded various Pakistani military infrastructure.

Twenty Days On: Zubeen Garg's Death Turns into Assam's Deepest Political Battle

Twenty days have passed since the shocking news of Zubeen Garg's death shattered Assam and sent waves of disbelief across the Northeast. Yet, what should have been a time of quiet remembrance for one of the region's most loved musicians has instead spiraled into a bitter political showdown - where grief, anger, and power have collided in an atmosphere thick with suspicion and blame.

The mystery surrounding Zubeen's sudden demise in Singapore continues to haunt his family, fans, and followers. Questions about what truly happened on that fateful night remain unanswered, and the official silence from authorities has only deepened the sense of unease. As investigations drag on and the Special Investigation Team (SIT) offers little clarity, the public's demand for truth has transformed into a collective cry for justice - one that now reverberates through Assam's charged political corridors.

From Mourning to Mayhem: A State in Turmoil

When Zubeen Garg, often called the "Voice of Assam," was found dead under mysterious circumstances aboard a private yacht in Singapore, the first reaction was disbelief. For decades, his music had been the heartbeat of Assam - crossing boundaries of language, tribe, and politics. His songs celebrated love, rebellion, and pride in Assamese identity.

But within days, that shared grief began to fracture. Instead of unity, Zubeen's passing has revealed Assam's deeply polarized political landscape. With each passing day, the investigation into his death has grown more opaque - and more politicized.

The Assam government, led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, insists that the state police and its SIT are capable of uncovering the truth. But the opposition claims otherwise. What started as an investigation into the death of a beloved artist has now evolved into an open political war - one that pits faith in the government's intentions against growing suspicions of a cover-up.

Congress Fires the First Salvo

The political storm erupted on September 29, when Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi accused Chief Minister Sarma of "extremely suspicious" involvement in the case. His statement - blunt and emotionally charged - ignited a chain reaction across Assam's political spectrum. Gogoi's demand for a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe struck a chord with many who already doubted the fairness of the ongoing state-led inquiry.

"The people of Assam deserve to know the truth about Zubeen's death," Gogoi declared, adding that "those in power must not be allowed to manipulate justice." His remarks instantly triggered outrage from the ruling BJP, which accused the Congress of exploiting public sentiment for political mileage.

Sarma Strikes Back: "Politics Over a Dead Man Is Awful"

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, never one to back down from confrontation, dismissed Gogoi's allegations as "politically motivated drama." At a public event, Sarma accused opposition parties of trying to "erode public trust" in Assam's police force and the SIT handling the case.

He went a step further - turning the moral tables on his critics. When Rajiv Dal chairman Akhil Gogoi shared a photo of himself with the late musician, Sarma lashed out: "We have never seen Akhil Gogoi as a fan of late Zubeen Garg. Has anyone seen him post about Zubeen's songs? Did he ever attend Zubeen's concerts? This is nothing but politics - and doing politics with a dead person is awful."

For Sarma, the opposition's demand for a CBI inquiry was less about truth and more about optics - an orchestrated campaign, he said, "to destabilize the faith of Assamese people in their own institutions."

But his defensive tone only fueled speculation. To many observers, it seemed that the Chief Minister was more focused on silencing critics than on ensuring transparency.

The BJP and Rajiv Dal Join the Fray

The Assam Jatiya Parishad (AJP), too, entered the debate. Party secretary Chittaranjan Basumatary accused the Chief Minister of "politicising a sensitive issue" and called for a Supreme Court-monitored investigation. He alleged that there was a "deep political conspiracy" to hide the truth behind Zubeen's death.

"This is not just about one man's passing," Basumatary said. "This is about the dignity of Assam's cultural icons. If the government cannot ensure justice for Zubeen, what faith can the people have in its integrity?"

Akhil Gogoi echoed similar sentiments, stating that "the government's nervous reaction proves that something larger is being concealed." The political temperature in Assam rose rapidly - and the battle lines were drawn between those defending the government's handling of the case and those demanding outside intervention.

Never announce it, just get it done.

The Shyamkanu Mahanta Factor: A Web of Influence
On October 7,



Chief Minister Sarma made a remark that turned the controversy in an unexpected direction. While addressing reporters, he hinted at a "close link" between event manager Shyamkanu Mahanta, who is under CID scrutiny for alleged financial irregularities, and Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi. Sarma described them as "bundiya-bhujijya" - inseparable friends.

This cryptic comment further muddied the waters. Mahanta, known for organizing major cultural and tourism events in the Northeast, had been one of Zubeen's long-time associates in the entertainment circuit. His name has since surfaced in social media discussions about the artist's final days in Singapore, though no official confirmation has been made about his presence at the yacht party.

For Sarma, the connection between Mahanta and Gogoi symbolized what he framed as "a coordinated nexus to mislead the people of Assam." For the opposition, however, the Chief Minister's statement was seen as a deliberate attempt to divert attention from more pressing questions - particularly about who was actually with Zubeen that night and what transpired aboard the yacht before his death.

"Ten Percent of Zubeen's Fans Are Now My Fans"

In one of his more controversial remarks, the Chief Minister recently claimed that a portion of Zubeen's admirers had expressed satisfaction with the government's ongoing investigation. "Around ten percent of Zubeen's fans have now become my fans," he said, citing the "respect we've given to him."

Sarma also sought to establish his personal closeness with the late artist:

"I myself am among Zubeen's biggest admirers. Who composed my father's songs? It was Zubeen Garg. If there's a contest for Zubeen's biggest fan, my name will be among the top ten. I've always regarded him like an elder brother."

While his attempt to humanize his connection with Zubeen might have been intended to cool tempers, it instead provoked criticism from opposition ranks who accused him of trivializing a tragedy. Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi shot back that the Chief Minister was "more concerned with defending Shyamkanu Mahanta than delivering justice for Zubeen Garg."

Gaurav Gogoi's Retort: "Protecting the Powerful, Not the Truth"

Gaurav Gogoi, standing by his earlier accusations, argued that the government's reaction itself betrayed its defensiveness. "The Chief Minister's repeated personal remarks and attacks only show that he is trying to protect certain individuals connected to this case," he said. "Justice for Zubeen Garg is not about politics - it is about truth."

He further alleged that the administration was selectively targeting those who questioned it while conveniently ignoring potential witnesses or suspects within its own circle of influence. "If the government has nothing to hide, why not hand over the case to the CBI or allow judicial supervision?" Gogoi asked.

He also condemned what he called "divisive and inflammatory" rhetoric from the Chief Minister, pointing to Sarma's remarks about the public reaction to Zubeen's death. Gogoi warned that such statements "risked stoking communal and regional tensions" at a time when people were still grieving.

The Unanswered Questions of Singapore

Meanwhile, the Special Investigation Team set up by the Assam Police has come under intense scrutiny. Despite public promises of a "transparent and time-bound" inquiry, there has been little visible progress.

Congress leader Mira Borthakur accused the SIT of showing "selective interest," pointing out that while the team has reportedly been pursuing allegations about Gaurav Gogoi's "ISI links," it has not even questioned key witnesses - particularly members of the Assamese community in Singapore who were allegedly present at the yacht party where Zubeen spent his final hours.

"This double standard in the investigation is unacceptable," Borthakur said. "If the government can send teams abroad to chase political smears, it can certainly talk to the people who were with Zubeen in his last moments."

Her remarks struck a chord with the public mood in Assam, where frustration is mounting over the lack of tangible updates. Many of Zubeen's fans and fellow artists have taken to social media, demanding an impartial probe free from political interference.

now become a symbol of a divided state - where even mourning has become a political act.

For three decades, Zubeen was not just a singer but a cultural force - a man who defied genres, crossed linguistic boundaries, and sang in Assamese, Bengali, Hindi, and English with equal ease. His songs like Mayabini, Ya Ali, Pakhi Pakhi, and Anamika were anthems for generations. He represented a kind of fearless artistry - unafraid of speaking truth to power, unafraid of controversy.

That same independence of spirit is what many now fear cost him dearly. Whether his death was an accident, a conspiracy, or something else entirely, the fact remains: the people of Assam feel cheated - of answers, of justice, and of closure.

The Road Ahead: Justice or Political Theatre?

As of now, the investigation remains shrouded in uncertainty. The SIT claims to be "making progress," but without public disclosure or tangible evidence, its credibility continues to erode. The government's insistence that "no foul play" has been found so far stands in stark contrast to the widespread belief that something far more sinister is being hidden.

The opposition, meanwhile, shows no signs of backing down. Both Congress and regional parties are preparing to take the issue to the national stage - potentially raising it in Parliament and seeking judicial intervention. Civil society groups, too, are planning petitions demanding that the case be moved out of Assam's jurisdiction altogether.

In the end, this struggle over Zubeen Garg's death is no longer just about one investigation. It has become a test of Assam's political conscience - a measure of whether truth can still triumph over expediency.

Epilogue: The Music That Lives On

Twenty days since his passing, the air in Assam still carries Zubeen's songs - from local tea stalls to night-time radio shows. His music endures even as the politics around his death grows darker. For many, his melodies are the only refuge from the noise of accusation and denial. But amid this cacophony, one thing remains clear: Zubeen Garg's death has left behind not just a void in music, but a moral question that the state cannot ignore. Will Assam rise above political opportunism to seek truth and justice for one of its brightest sons?

Or will Zubeen's legacy - like so many of his haunting songs - fade unresolved, echoing only as a reminder of promises broken and truths buried beneath politics?

Only time will tell. But the people of Assam, still grieving and still waiting, deserve an answer - not slogans, not speeches, but the truth.

The People's Verdict: Grief Turning into Anger

As the blame game intensifies, the real victims of this political spectacle are Zubeen Garg's family, friends, and millions of admirers. Candlelight vigils continue across Assam - from Tezpur to Guwahati, from Dibrugarh to Silchar - but they are no longer just memorials. They have become silent protests against a system that many believe is more invested in defending its image than in uncovering the truth.

Zubeen's widow, Garima, and close associates have largely refrained from public statements, but sources close to the family say they are "deeply disheartened" by how political the entire episode has become. The family's legal representatives have reportedly requested that the government expedite the forensic and toxicology reports from Singapore - documents that may hold crucial answers about the circumstances of his death.

Meanwhile, public distrust in the government's handling of the case continues to grow. On social media, hashtags like #JusticeForZubeen, #WhoKilledZubeen, and #TruthForZubeenGarg have trended repeatedly. Citizens' groups are calling for independent oversight, arguing that only a transparent investigation - preferably under the Supreme Court's supervision - can restore public confidence.

Zubeen Garg's Legacy: Beyond the Politics

In life, Zubeen Garg's voice united Assam. In death, it has exposed the fault lines of its politics. The artist who sang of unity, love, and identity has

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Theme: 2025

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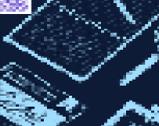


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