



## Section I

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## Dr Bhupen Hazarika Passes Away

### Staff Reporter

**GUWAHATI, Nov 5** : Legendary musician, cultural icon, Dada Saheb Phalke awardee Dr Bhupen Hazarika is no more. Death snatched him away around 4-35 pm today at the Mumbai-based Kokilaben Dhirubhai-Ambani Hospital. The hospital authorities formally declared his death around 4-37 pm. According to doctors attending on him, death occurred to Dr Hazarika due to cardiac failure. He was admitted to the hospital on June 29 last following breathing problems. Immediately after the declaration, the hospital authorities shifted his body to the morgue of the hospital. The body would be brought to Guwahati on Monday and the State Government is planning to keep it at the Judges' Field for two days to enable the people to pay their last respect to him. The State Government would arrange for his state funeral in Guwahati, said State Government sources from New Delhi.

The Assam Government has declared a three-day state mourning from tomorrow and a half holiday on November 8 as a mark of respect to the departed soul, said an official release.

His body would be taken to his Mumbai house before being taken to Guwahati for the last rites.

During his last hours, his sister-in-law and artiste Monisha Hazarika, writer Anuradha Sarma Pujari and her husband Pradip Pujari, filmmaker Kalpana Lajmi and a host of relatives and fans were there by his side. The members of the Assamese community thronged the Kokilaben-Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital as soon as the news of the demise of Dr Hazarika spread. Those

who rushed to the hospital to pay their last respects to the celebrated musician included Arjuna awardee Monalisa Barua Mehta and actress Mridula Barua.

The Maharashtra Chief Minister is expected to pay his last respect to Dr Hazarika at the hospital late this evening itself. Renowned singer Lata Mangeskar has also conveyed her condolence to the bereaved family members over phone.

Fans of the famous musician gathered at the Nizarapar family residence of the Hazarikas in the city to sympathise with the family members.

**PTI adds from London:** Overcome with grief at the demise of Bhupen Hazarika, his Leicester-based younger brother Prabin said the legend will be remembered for inspiring generations of Assamese youth.

Prabin, a teacher who migrated to Britain in 1973, was shocked when informed of the demise. He fondly remembered his brother who last visited him in Leicester in 1999, and paid tributes to his life and achievements.

"After Independence, Assam became known to most parts of India mainly through Bhupenda's music. He inspired generations of Assamese, particularly the young people," he said. Prabin, a singer and poet in his own right, remained in close touch with his brother. Prabin is one of six children of Nilakanta and Shantipriya Hazarika, the eldest of whom was Bhupen Hazarika. The passing away of Hazarika, whose music touched the hearts of many people in India and outside, was condoled by several Indians settled in the UK.

*Courtesy, The Assam Tribune, Nov 6, 2011*



**People paying their last respects to Dr Bhupen Hazarika at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai-Ambani Hospital in Mumbai.**



## Rest, Dear \*Jajabor

Samyabrata Ray Goswami

**Mumbai, Nov. 5:** The jajabor will travel no more. Balladeer Bhupenda breathed his last at 4.37pm at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital and Medical Research Institute in Mumbai, a few minutes after his partner for 29 years, Kalpana Lajmi, assured him she would take him back to Assam once he got well.

He had been under treatment since April 2009 after he suffered a stroke while performing at a Bihu function at Noonmati in Guwahati. He was 85.”

I was with him from 3.45pm to 4pm. He was conscious. I told him I would take him home

after he got well. He rolled his eyes in response and I asked him to rest,” Lajmi told **The Telegraph**.

She came out and told the doctors she didn't think he would survive the day. “They said he would not go away suddenly but I knew he was a fighter and he would not go slowly,” Lajmi said. It was at 4.15pm that the doctors came out and told her that he was “sinking.” She went back to his room and after a while the doctors said he was “gone.” “They said they could continue keeping him like that for long and that the call was mine. I could not see him in that state any longer and asked



*People paying their last respects to Dr Bhupen Hazarika, as his body lay in state at Judges Field, Guwahati during the three day mourning period declared by the Assam Government.*

them to take him off life support,” she said.

As news of his death spread, admirers started pouring into the hospital to pay their respects and it was after 7pm that Manisha Hazarika, his sister-in-law, started ushering in visitors in twos into the room inside the ICU where he lay, with his trademark cap on.”

A few days back when he was still conscious he had told me to make sure that his cap was put back when he died and to keep the air conditioner on because he felt hot,” Lajmi said.”

He had also wanted to have *pabo macher jhol*, fried brinjal, *aloo posto* and *kasha mangsho* cooked in Bengali style,” she said, adding that she told him she would give him all of these once he got well.”

I don’t generally cry, but for the past eight days I have been crying... perhaps I knew he was going,” she said.

Sandip Hazarika, his nephew, said he had gone to Hazarika’s room at 2.30pm. “He was conscious and I connected my phone to our family members who spoke to him. He didn’t speak, but it looked like he was recognising the various voices as tears were rolling down his cheeks,” he said at the hospital.

The Assam government has declared a three-day state mourning. Hazarika’s body will be taken to Guwahati on Monday and kept at Judges Field till noon on Tuesday for people to pay their last respects. Initially, family members, friends and Lajmi were in two minds about whether to take Hazarika’s body to Assam tomorrow or the day after, given the overwhelming pressure from the people to take the body there tomorrow.

The issue was settled after discussions among family members, friends, Lajmi, hospital authorities, Maharashtra health minister Suresh Shetty, Assam chief secretary Naba Kumar Das and officials from Assam chief minister’s office.

Hospital authorities said the body could not be sent for embalming today as people were pouring in to pay their last respects till 9.30pm. Since mourners would be allowed between 4pm and 5pm tomorrow as well, the embalming could begin only after that and the body flown to Guwahati the day after. It

was then decided to keep the body at the convention centre of the hospital and have it flown to Guwahati by an early morning flight on Monday.

Family members and friends thought of requesting the Assam government to send a special aircraft to take the body. But Shetty pointed out that though Hazarika deserved a special aircraft, at most the government could charter an eight-seater or a 12-seater. In that case many family members and friends would not be able to travel with the body, as the coffin would take up space of about six seats.

Shetty also pointed out that more time was required for a state funeral, as it is conducted by the armed forces and they have to prepare to the last protocol detail and something might be amiss if it was rushed. He cited the instance of Sunil Dutt, who was also accorded a state funeral but full justice could not be done, as his family had wanted the last rites to be completed before sun down that day.”

To make his (Hazarika’s) last journey beautiful, give the administration a day,” he advised family and friends.

Expressing sadness over his death, chief minister Tarun Gogoi described Hazarika as a legendary figure in many respects who won the hearts of everybody. “He was broad-minded like an ocean,” he said in Delhi.

Assam governor J.B. Patnaik said he was shocked to hear about the demise of the “greatest music maestros of our country and one of the most renowned sons of Assam. It is an irreparable loss,” he said.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh also condoled the demise of the legendary singer and composer. “Prime Minister condoles the demise of Bhupen Hazarika,” a PMO spokesperson said.

Scores of young Assamese students arrived in Mumbai from Pune in buses to pay tribute to the icon. The turnout of admirers and well-wishers, in fact, comprised 60 per cent of the young.

The *jajabor* at 86 was as much a youth icon.

*\* A wanderer, nomad.*

**Courtesy, The Telegraph, 6 November, 2011**



## THE GREAT VOID



*People thronging the streets to catch a last glimpse of their beloved Dr Bhupen Hazarika as the convoy carrying his body moves past on its way to Nizarapar*

### By our Staff Reporter

**GUWAHATI, Nov 5:** A golden voice of Indian music and cultural icon fell silent on Saturday when legendary poet-composer-singer Bhupen Hazarika died of multiple organ failure at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Memorial Hospital in Mumbai, plunging millions of fans across the country, especially those in Assam, into gloom. He was 85. Hazarika, who was on ventilator for four months and had been in and out of hospital, passed away at 4.37 pm at the hospital. Hundreds of people thronged the Guwahati residence of Bhupen Hazarika at Nizarapar. Thousands of people also gathered at the Dighalipukhuri area in Guwahati to pay tribute before the statue of the departed singer.

The Assam Government has declared a three-day State mourning with effect from November 6 and a half-holiday on November 8 next. During the

mourning period, there will be no official entertainment in the State. The Axaam Xahitya Xabha (AXX) also announced a three-day mourning. The last rites will be performed as State honour by the State Government. His body will be brought back to Guwahati on Monday and will be kept at the Judges' Field for two days so that people could pay their last tribute to him. Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, BJP National President Nitin Gadkari, Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi and Viswa Hindu Parishad leader Pravin Togadia have expressed their profound grief and sorrow at the demise of the music maestro.

Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, who was in Delhi, also directed State Cultural Minister Pranati Phukan to go to Mumbai to make all the arrangements to bring back the body of Dr Hazarika to Guwahati. From common people to celebrities to politicians, the

death of the music maestro is an irreparable loss not only to the country but also to the world. In his condolence message, Assam Governor JB Patnaik said, "I am deeply shocked at the demise of Dr Hazarika, one of the greatest music maestros of our country and one of the most renowned sons of Assam. A multifaceted genius, he was a legendary musician, singer and lyricist, actor and film director, poet, writer and journalist of the highest order. At this hour of grief, I pray to the Almighty for peace of the departed soul. May God give his family the strength to bear this tragic loss." Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, in his condolence message, said, "Today is the saddest day for the people of Assam. Bhupen Hazarika is not only a favourite singer in Assam but also throughout the world. He was a shining star. His death is also a great loss to the people who love singing. He will be remembered for his great works. Through his songs, he created a sense of brotherhood among the people. Besides a singer, he was musician and litterateur. The Assam Government had tried its best for the treatment of the ailing Hazarika. We have lost an icon of our era." People belonging to Assam's film fraternity also expressed their grief. Moloya Goswami, a noted Assamese actress, said, "Bhupenda's death is a great loss for Assam. The contribution of Hazarika towards the culture of Assam is remarkable and his works took Assam to a new height." Another actress, Nishita Goswami, said, "No other person will ever be able to take the place of Dr Bhupen Hazarika in Assam. I met him recently at a programme organized by Star Cement." President of the AXX Rong Bong Terang, in his condolence message, said, "Bhupen Hazarika was an asset for Assam. With his death, an era has ended. He was loved and respected by the people from every section of the society." Rita Chowdhury, a noted writer in Assam, said, "Bhupen Hazarika helped in creating the Assamese consciousness. He tried to project Assam in a big way to the outside world." Manas Robin, singer, lyricist and composer, said, "Bhupen mama's death is a very sad news for us." Jahnu Baruah, a nationally renowned Assamese film director, said, "I am shocked to hear the news of Bhupen Hazarika's demise. His death is a great loss for the people of the whole country. He was very special to me. Nobody can replace him. We are proud that he took birth in Assam." Pulok Banerjee, a noted singer from Assam, said, "Bhupen Hazarika's death is considered as an end of a cultural era. Man is

mortal. So, we have accepted the sad news." Zubin Garg, a famous singer, said, "As long as the Assamese society lives, the loss of Bhupen Hazarika will be felt." Renowned singer Khagen Mahanta said, "It was a great shock. I have no words. I had good relations with him. He also helped in building a strong sense of integration among the people of Assam." AASU advisor Samujjal Bhattacharya, in his message, said, "Not only Assam but India has lost one of its greatest artistes also." Samar Hazarika, brother of Dr Bhupen Hazarika, said, "His death is an unbelievable thing to me. He was a father-figure to me and later he treated me like his friend. He gave more than he could for the betterment of the Assamese society." Meanwhile, wife of deceased Bhupen Hazarika, Priyam Hazarika, who is now in New York, would not be able to join the funeral of the music maestro due to her ill health and his son Tez Hazarika's arrival to Guwahat is still uncertain, family sources of Hazarika said.

*Courtesy: The Sentinel, November 6, 2011*





## Music mourns maestro

Unknown Mumbai flautist pays tribute

Samyabrata Ray Goswami

**Nov. 6:** For 30 years, Suhas Joshi could never meet the man whose music inspired him with spontaneity. Today, his flute wailed his lament as he offered his last respects to Bhupen Hazarika through music. A little known Maharashtra flautist keened and mourned in Raag Bairagi for the songbird of the Brahmaputra whose music moved the nation. No one had asked him to come. No one had asked him to play. But he stood in a queue outside Mumbai's Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital for nearly two hours to pay his respects to Hazarika at the hospital's convention centre. Over 500 people — mostly hailing from Assam — came from different parts of Maharashtra and stood quietly in that queue in such a dignified order that it looked out of place in Mumbai's shoving-jostling world. Bollywood stayed largely absent — save Ila Arun and Madhur Bhandarkar, the sole representative of the Hindi film industry was former actress Tina Munim, now the wife of Anil Ambani and chairperson of the Kokilaben hospital. She said, "In these six months he had become like a member of the Kokilaben hospital family. He was a great man." People spontaneously left their shoes behind as they entered the convention hall where Hazarika lay in state, surrounded by partner Kalpana Lajmi and his extended family. There was near silence in the large hall as hundreds poured in a single file to pay their last respects. And then from among them, a man with a white flowing beard and a tiny ponytail on his near bald pate, stepped out and took out a flute and started playing. The emotionally charged crowd — mesmerised by the music — listened in rapt silence. Joshi, 67, sat on a chair and played on as Bhupen Hazarika's sister-in-law and late Jayanta Hazarika's wife Manisha walked upto his side and broke down in silent tears. The resonating strains of the bamboo flute gave voice to the silent grief of the hundreds present in that hall. Joshi, who plays under a banyan tree outside Mumbai's Prithvi Theatre every evening — oblivious of the curious and charmed crowds that spill over from Prithvi Café to huddle around — is an architect by profession and has his own firm. "Yesterday, Mukul Doley,

an Assam youth who often comes to hear me play and chat with me at Prithvi, told me about Bhupenda's death and I had to come to pay my tribute," said Joshi. Mukul, 27, who hails from Majuli, studied in Guwahati's Arya Vidyapeeth and then did his MBA from Bangalore. "I was very sad when I came to Prithvi last evening from Kokilaben Hospital. Bhupenda had gone and I felt a loss I cannot explain in words. I needed to grieve and I needed to comfort myself. I come to Prithvi very often. Joshiji's music soothes me. I told him about Bhupenda and we decided he should play today. We did not care that we were strangers who nobody knew. We just had to bid Bhupenda a proper farewell and Joshiji bade such a beautiful goodbye," said Mukul. A woman broke down sobbing and threw herself on Bhupenda. The doctors signalled. "This couldn't be allowed. An embalmed body should not be touched, it spoils the effects," said doctor Shailendra Goel who was Hazarika's intensivist at the hospital. The last mourners were leaving — Jayanta Hazarika's son and Bhupen Hazarika's nephew Mayukh stood up with a couple of other family members to wheel the body back to the hospital mortuary. "He will stay there tonight. Between 2am and 3am tomorrow, the cortege will leave the hospital for the airport from where Bhupenda will be taken by a Jet Airways flight to Guwahati," said Goel. "I cannot imagine what will happen at Guwahati tomorrow," said Mayukh, a talented singer and an equally talented creative videographer with NDTV. "It is a strange coincidence, but pictures of 2003 are flashing in my mind. He was coming to Guwahati to fight elections — the crowd at the airport was a sea of humanity. This is another journey — and this time it will be a tumultuous ocean of grief-stricken people," he said. Mayukh had travelled with Hazarika on that day of 2003 to cover the election campaign on behalf of NDTV. This time he is travelling again back home with his uncle, only Hazarika won't be on his feet with raised hands cheering his admirers. He is lying cold in a coffin seeking eternal rest on his beloved Assam's soil.

*Courtesy: The Sentinel, November 5, 2011*