Section II- The last journey

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Guwahati, Nov. 7: It took a little over four hours for the early morning Mumbai-Guwahati Jet Airways flight to bring Bhupen Hazarika home but the usual banter and chatter on board was missing. This would have been unthinkable, had the maestro been occupying one of the seats instead of the coffin, said those who knew him intimately, given his zest for life and popularity. “It (the flight) reminded me of the irony of the situation: Bhupenda had once composed a memorable number with so much of passion and compassion during an early morning Calcutta-Tezpur flight. Today’s was a similar kind of trip, with the maestro gone forever. There was a tremendous sense of void and loss inside the flight,” an emotional Shantanu Thakur, secretary in the cultural affairs department, told The Telegraph.

Thakur, who had flown to Mumbai along with cultural affairs minister Pranati Phukan to fetch his body on Sunday, was referring to one of Hazarika’s creations: Akaxi janere uronia monere/Pachimor pora/Bongor pora; marilo ura/Mor lakhyasthan hol Tezpur. Phukan suffered similar pangs of loss. “The mood was sombre and one of emptiness. I was feeling very low,” she said. Most passengers kept to themselves, including Hazarika’s long-time companion Kalpana Lajmi, sister-in-law Manisha Hazarika and her son and popular artiste Mayukh Hazarika. The flight that left Mumbai at 7.40am reached Guwahati at 11.40am. When the airline made the announcement about the flight carrying the coffin of Hazarika, passengers came up to those accompanying the body to offer their condolences, describing him as an “artiste par excellence”. When Thakur informed the pilot that the announcement was about a man who had composed Akaxi janere, he was told that not only that particular number but a lot many other songs of the maestro were very well known to the entire crew. “We have heard about larger-than-life personalities but what this expression actually meant was driven home to me on this flight. The sense of loss was increasing with every passing moment. The force of the Shakespearian lines from Julius Caesar hit me with full import and impact for the first time. With the body of Caesar by his side, Mark Antony had once said, ‘My heart lies there in the coffin with Caesar and I must pause till it comes back to me’. It may not be an exaggeration to say that the light has almost gone out from the lives of the Assamese people.”

Courtesy: The Telegraph, Nov 8, 2011
Guwahati, Nov. 7: It was a heartbroken wave of humanity that stood outside Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport today, sobbing unembarrassedly for a man who sang his way into their hearts, lives and minds.

They wept, they wailed, they gathered dust from the maestro’s cortege and smeared it on their faces, sang in an impromptu chorus and grieved in a way only Bhupen Hazarika could command.

Elsewhere in the city, someone came with a bottle filled with holy water of Parasuram Kunda and a token from the Dalai Lama wrapped in paper. They wanted to give their most prized possession to their Bhupen da.

The aircraft carrying Hazarika’s body touched down at 11.57am, 17 minutes behind schedule.

By then the crowd had become uncontrollable for the more than 200 policemen deployed at the airport. Fifteen minutes after the plane landed, the coffin was taken out on a truck decorated with flowers.

Accompanying his body were his long-time partner Kalpana Lajmi, guitarist Kamal Kakati, sister-in-law Manisha Hazarika, nephew Mayukh Hazarika and Assam cultural affairs minister Pranati Phukan.

Lajmi, who had been with Hazarika like a shadow since she came into his life almost three decades ago, broke down as soon as she saw the emotionally charged crowd. Wiping her tears, she stood with folded hands till Assam governor J.B. Patnaik and chief minister Tarun Gogoi came forward to offer their tribute to the bard.

Kamal Kataki, who has played guitar with Hazarika for several decades now, also stood on the truck, weeping. The person who called himself a “flying bee” and could not find a “tree” to rest, had at last reached a place from where he would never return.

When the cortege left the airport at 12.27pm, the
crowd went along a few hundred metres and as soon as it left Borjhar, a cavalcade of 500 motorcycles followed. Holding placards with slogans like “Bhupenda you have kept your promise of remaining an extraordinary person while being with ordinary people. You yourself a song of deep conviction and we offer salute to the person who have introduced the Northeast to the world”, many still stood on the airport premises. In unison, they sang *Manuhe manuhor babe* and *We are in the same boat brother* (a song by Paul Robeson, which was sung by Bhupen Hazarika in almost all his programmes). Forty-five-year-old Dwijen Kalita stood on the road divider, hoping to grab a flower from the coffin of the musician he loved most. He will treasure it for the rest of his life. The love and desperation of the people to get one last look at his coffin resulted in the body reaching home over five hours after it left the airport, covering nearly 30km. Grief-stricken people by the thousands stood on the road with marigold and incense sticks at intervals of hundred metres. They sang his immortal songs, showered flowers when the vehicle passed by and tried to take pictures of the vehicle with their mobile phones and cameras. Tears flowed freely; there was no embarrassment.

“He is returning home by the same road he used to go abroad. This time he has come not to return again. He will be here, among us, but will sing no more,” said Ranjit Deka, with tears in eyes. At 1.54pm, the procession entered the campus of Gauhati University, where the balladeer worked as a teacher for a brief period. His body was taken to the university’s stadium. Everyone stood up and without using any instrument sang the university’s song *Jiilikabo Luitore Par*, which was composed and sung by Hazarika when the university was inaugurated. The procession was again stopped near Sonaram Higher Secondary School, where Hazarika studied in Class VI, Cotton College, and Dighalipukhuri, before it started for his home at Nizarapar. Hundreds stood for hours since evening on the road in front of Judges Field to pay their last respects. After his body reached the playground around 9.30pm, it was placed in a glass casket under the makeshift auditorium. By the time the gate to the field was thrown open at 10pm, a serpentine queue had formed, its tail reaching the underground car park near Nehru Park.

An all-religion prayer meeting was also held, virtually the only sound emanating in the near pin-drop silence that engulfed the venue.

*Courtesy: The Telegraph, Nov 8, 2011*
By our Staff Reporter
GUWAHATI, Nov 7: While the news of Bhupen Hazarika's demise is yet to sink in the minds of the people, the visionary himself seemed to have visualized the impact of his songs and life on the people long back. But even the bard might not have fathomed the extent to which his songs and poems had influenced the people of Assam as lakhs and
lakhs of teary-eyed people swelled on the streets of the State, in a manner never witnessed before, since early morning today to receive the body of their much loved balladeer.

Indeed, Bhupen Hazarika might have left his physical state here on earth but the fact that he will continue to live forever in the hearts and minds of every Assamese was evident in the heart-rending cries of “Bhupen Hazarika Amar Hok” (Long live Bhupen Hazarika) that was let out by the mammoth crowd that had assembled at the Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport to receive his body. Watching the sea of humanity — perched atop trees, on top of trucks, bridges and jostling for space on footpaths — trying to stop their tears while screaming their maestro’s evergreen numbers in a bid to suppress their grief, provided for the creation of a poignancy that is bound to remain etched in one’s heart and mind forever.

Even as the huge crowd in the airport sobbed inconsolably as the legendary humanitarian’s coffin was brought out of Jet Airways aircraft 619, hundreds of thousands of people holding placards, photographs, wreaths and petals continued to come out on the streets of Guwahati, assembling along the 26-km long route through which the coffin was supposed to pass, so that they could pay their last tributes to a man whom they have epitomized as the torchbearer of Assamese culture and identity. As shops all over the gateway city of the Northeast downed their shutters as the body reached Dighalipukhuri paar — where the bard had unveiled his own statue a few years back — a teary-eyed Assam today did indeed bid adieu to their legend in a befitting manner.

As the coffin was brought out of the airport before a ceremonial guard of honour at around noon, Governor JB Patnaik and Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi paid floral tributes to the legend. “I am numbed and speechless,” an emotionally charged Tarun Gogoi, who is otherwise known for his witty repertoire of speech, said in front of mediapersons. The hearse carrying the coffin, decorated with flowers, was accompanied by Kalpana Lajmi, his partner and companion for the last four decades, his family members, his nephew Mayukh Hazarika, Manisha Hazarika, State Culture Minister Pranati Phukan and Kamal Kataki. Lajmi, who had always been by the maestro’s side despite coming under scathing criticism from the people of the State on quite a few occasions, said, “I have lost my father, mentor and husband. He may have died, but his spirit would remain forever.”

The district administration had yesterday chalked out an itinerary for the hearse to follow, underlining the places where it would stop on its way to the Nizarapar residence from the airport. However, the tremendous support of the people threw the State government’s plans totally off-gear and it reached his Nizarapar residence only at around 7 pm in the evening — much later than the government’s scheduled time of 2:30 pm.

Heart-rending scenes were witnessed all along the route from the airport to the Chandmari area of Guwahati today as lakhs of people waited along both sides of the road, lighting earthen lamps and holding placards, along with photos of the maestro that were placed atop bamboo plantains.

The first major stop of the procession was at Gauhati University — a place where Bhupen Hazarika had spent some of the most memorable events of his life. With a group of students rendering Jilikabo Luitore Par — a song he had written on the university — the crowd of more than 4,000 people that had gathered stood silently with tears streaming down their face as they watched life coming full circle for their legend. GU VC Akhil Kumar Medhi, GU Registrar Uttam Chandra Das, Tezpur University VC Mihir Kr Choudhury, Guwahati MLA Robin Bordoloi, Director General of Police Shankar Barua and Chief Secretary Naba Das were also present in the university.

The procession later on stopped at Garegaon, Gauripur, Adabari, Maligaon, Pandu, Kamakhya Gate, Kalipur, Santipur, Lalit Chandra Bharali College, Bhootnath, Bharalumukh, Fancy Bazar and Dighalipukhuri paar.

Once in his Nizarapar residence, the body was taken inside the balladeer’s bedroom while troupes from a neighbouring naam ghar performed gayan bayan outside the residence. The coffin was placed on his usual bed, which was shrouded in a white cloth and adorned with yellow flowers. Singing lines from the immortal Biswar Sande Sande, family members performed the requisite Hindu rites and rituals inside his bedroom, smearing the body with turmeric, even as traditional nam kirtan and prayers were performed alongside the bard’s bed.

The body was later taken to Judges Field where it would be kept overnight and tomorrow morning for public viewing. According to sources, the cremation is likely to take place around 12 noon tomorrow.

*Courtesy: The Sentinel. Nov. 8, 2011*
DATELINE Guwahati/
It was as if they tried to keep pace with the Brahmaputra’s flow. Men, women and children from all corners of Assam, from all strata of society, cutting through ethnicities and caste, poured in to Guwahati in thousands to bid adieu to the bard they loved the most, Dr Bhupen Hazarika.
Bhupenda breathed his last at 4.37 pm on Saturday, November 5, at the Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital in Mumbai, where he was admitted five months ago. It was pneumonia that ultimately took him away from us all. If it was rare for anyone to begin a singing career at the age of 10, it is also rare for anyone to have continued with this career for a period spanning seven-and-a-half decades. So when he died, aged 85, Bhupenda had already completed 75 years of mesmerizing people with his soulful love ballads and other music.
He was not just a music maestro, he was a cultural icon who stood like a colossus, making sure Assam got noticed in the country, be it in the field of music and films, but also in other cultural fields like dance, for instance. People knew him as a great singer, musician, lyricist, poet, journalist and film-maker, but one rare side of Bhupenda was not so popular—he was a painter and artist of some repute. In fact, I was shown the sketches which Bhupenda did by one of his closest friends, Hemendra Prasad Barooah, the tea industrialist. In fact, these sketches adorn the walls of Hemen Barooah’s bungalow in Jorhat.

In Silence, Millions Vowed to Keep Bhupenda’s Music Alive
Wasbir Hussain

People climbing walls to catch a last glimpse of their beloved Dr Bhupen Hazarika.
Today, as we think about the people who poured in lakhs to pay homage to their beloved singer, we realize the quantum of Bhupenda’s appeal among the masses. No wonder he was called a mass singer. Looking at the multitude of his fans and admirers who congregated in Guwahati to bid him a final farewell, recognitions that came his way such as the Dada Saheb Phalke looked small. Bhupenda deserves much more. BJP leader Sushma Swaraj, who was here to attend the funeral, did not bat an eye lid to say, in reply to a question, that yes the nation should confer the Bharat Ratna on Dr Bhupen Hazarika. In fact, there has been a chorus of sorts for quite sometime now that the legend be conferred with the country’s highest civilian award.

What is it that made Bhupenda tick? No short answer can be expected to this question. But, one thing that can be said is that the themes he chose for his songs and the lyrics appealed to the masses because he touched upon issues they faced, the trials and tribulations of the ordinary man. If he would urge the Assamese to be self reliant and understand the dignity of labour, he would also talk about the poor peasants who have no weapon with them whatsoever. He would often sing about harmony among the hill people and those who live on the plains. Whenever the region would be rocked by a major event, like the Chinese invasion in 1962, Bhupenda would compose a song, a composition that would continue to be remembered or hummed for ever.

If his music had a trans-generational appeal, it also transcended borders. For example, during the Bangladesh liberation war in 1971, Bhupenda came up with Joyo, Joyo, Naba Joto Bangladesh (glory to the new nation). This, in fact, was an energetic marching tune that had inspired the Mukti Bahini fighters a great deal. No wonder, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was said to have personally expressed his appreciation to Bhupenda. A poll sometime ago in Bangladesh listed this as the second most popular or most loved song in that country after the national anthem ‘Amar Sonar Bangla…’ So, when I spoke to Tariq Ahmed Karim, Bangladesh’s High Commissioner in India this week, he said: ‘Dr Bhupen Hazarika is among the most loved musicians in Bangladesh. He is high on our list of honour.’

All of these perhaps go to explain why there was a sea of humanity in Guwahati ever since his body was brought in here until his last rites on Wednesday. The people who stood or filed past his body that lay in state inside an air-conditioned glass case at the historic Judge’s Field, of course, had a message for Bhupenda. They vowed in silence that they bard may be no more but that they would keep his music in their hearts and minds for all times to come.

_Courtesy: The Sentinel, November 12, 2011_
GUWAHATI, Nov 8:
Assam is still finding it hard to come in terms with the harsh fact that its lovable son Bhupen Hazarika is no more. The body of the balladeer has been kept inside an air-conditioned glass coffin at Judges Field for public viewing. Teary-eyed people are pouring in at Judges Field to pay their last respects to the music doyen since yesterday. People like businessman Atul Barman are still in a state of shock and disbelief. Barman reached Guwahati from Nalbari last evening. "I saw his body yesterday but I still can’t believe that he is no more," he said while standing in the long queue outside Judges Field to have a look at the body of the music maestro for the second time.

Mridul Phukan (18) has come from Nagaon with his friends to pay their last respects to Bhupen Hazarika. They sing his songs while waiting patiently in the queue. "I never had the opportunity to see Bhupenda’s live performance. Hopefully I can see his body and offer my tribute," said Phukan.

Kukeswar Gogoi (55), a teacher from Sivasagar, has been waiting his turn to offer tribute to the bard since morning. "I am having high fever since 2-3 days but when some people in my area hired vehicles to come to Guwahati and offer tribute to Bhupenda, I could not keep myself from hopping into one of the vehicles. I had to come," he said.

Suman, a Class VI student of Morigaon was introduced to Bhupenda’s songs through her father Jyoti Nath who is a music teacher. "My daughter persuaded me to come to Guwahati. We are waiting in the queue since morning but haven’t been able to go anywhere near the coffin," Nath told this reporter in the afternoon.

Mriganka and Kasturi Barua have come all the way from Tezpur. They have brought their daughter Parineeta along with them. "We have seen Bhupenda performing live but our daughter never had this opportunity. We have brought her here so that she can see the legend for one last time," said Kasturi.

A visibly emotional Binoy Dutta said, “About 30 years ago Bhupenda had come to Nazira for a Bihu
programme. He had come to my house for a meal. I can't believe that he is no more.”

“This kind of huge turnout of people is unprecedented,” said Manoj Kalita from Azara while referring to the sea of humanity that had gathered at Judges Field to pay their last respects to the music maestro. Sarad Deuri from Chandrapur will be going back home to break his fast. “I was on fast. Now that I have seen his body I will go home and break my fast,” he said. Bikram Ranjan Roy, a State Government employee from Bongaigaon has been standing in the queue outside Judges Field since morning today. When this reporter talked to him in the evening, he said, “I still haven’t been able to get in. I hope I can pay my respects to Bhupenda. Achinta Deka has come from Barpeta to see the body of the legend whose songs have become a part of his everyday life. “Before going to sleep I have to listen to Bhupenda’s songs for an hour,” he said.”

“For the past four to five hours I am standing here and I have come from Nalbari to have one last look of this legend. If I can see his body for the last time I will feel that the purpose of my life has been fulfilled,” said Diplali Das. Karabi Deka, a resident of Lachit Nagar said, “I have no words to explain what I am going through. Bhupenda’s songs will remain ever etched in our memories. Nobody can take his place. There cannot be another Bhupen Hazarika.”

Bhupen Hazarika was like a father-figure. He may be no more but he will always remain alive in our hearts,” said a teary-eyed Anjali Konwar, a resident of Bhangagarh. “I have come from Jogigopa to pay my last homage to the icon,” said Bina Sarma. Ten-year-old Jaisnu Thakuria said, “I have come to see the legend for the last time. I really like his song Manuhe Manuhor Babe.” Indeed the grief of having lost cultural icon Bhupen Hazarika has united the people of Assam, breaking all divides.

Courtesy: The Sentinel, Nov 9, 2011
Bhupen’s ‘son’ walks 35km after losing father

Guwahati, Nov. 6: A heartbroken “son” of Bhupen Hazarika today walked for 35km to Dighalipukhuri from his home in Hajo — his only companion being a ramshackle cycle plastered with the bard’s posters and a music set playing his songs fixed to the carrier. “Today, I am feeling as if I have lost my father,” said 42-year-old Joyram Das. “I will do all the rituals like doha and xokam for him and shave off my head. I will do everything a son does when his father passes away,” said a lion-cloth clad Das, tears in his eyes. Three months ago, when the music maestro was undergoing treatment in Mumbai, Das began a unique prayer campaign for his recovery. He hired a rickshaw, swathed some posters of Hazarika, wrote prayers on them and travelled from place to place, urging people to light candles and pray for the singer. Das was among the thousands of Hazarika devotees who did not have any personal relation with him but felt a strong emotional bond through his songs. “I met him (Hazarika) only once a few years ago at Nizarapar for a few minutes. But I have collected almost all his songs painstakingly and I love them more than anything else. His songs show me the way when I am in any dilemma and give me strength to live,” Das said. The air at Dighalipukhuri, where the All Assam Students’ Union set up Hazarika’s statue, hung heavy with grief, as shattered fans and followers offered floral tribute to the bard all through the day. Das stood near the statue, sometimes answering curious onlookers who enquired about his bicycle. The salesman said his family had asked him not to behave “this way”. “But how can I resist myself when my father died? I passed last night sleepless, set off for Guwahati early morning and walked down all the 35km recalling how he occupied my mind since my childhood. There was a small accident, too, on my way,” Das said. He said he wanted the new generations never to forget Hazarika and learn his songs with deep respect as they spoke about humanity. “His songs give us a direction in life when we are directionless and provide courage when we are in distress,” he said. Having spent the day near Hazarika’s statue, Das returned home at 5pm. At home, his family lit 105 diyas this evening praying for Hazarika’s soul.

Courtesy: The Telegraph, November 7
intervals when some would sing out one of those unforgettable numbers of the balladeer, to be joined by a few more.

The crowds had started pouring in from all directions since evening – hours before Dr Hazarika’s body was brought to the Judges’ Field from the maestro’s Nizarapar residence around 9-30 pm.

It was quite an assorted crowd that braved the late night chill and long hours to pay homage to the maestro. There was young and old alike, with a sizeable number of children as well. Tiny-tots were seen sleeping on the shoulders of their parents who were waiting peacefully in the queues.

A comment from one of the fans perhaps explained the situation best – even if God were to appear at the Judges’ Field today, he would not have got such a following. Well, that is what Bhupen Hazarika is – a legend who will live in the hearts of millions, entertaining and inspiring people for all the time to come.

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Staff Reporter
GUWAHATI, Nov 8: This was something totally unprecedented – a sea of humanity turning up in serpentine queues at the Judges’ Field till as late as 4 am last night. Their moist eyes were questing for one final glimpse of the mortal remains of their most beloved artiste – the music maestro, Dr Bhupen Hazarika. None had witnessed such a scene in the city in the past and nor will anyone get to see an encore of this in the days to come. It was a validation of the genius of the legend who had endeared himself into the hearts of the masses with his unparalleled compositions – creations that reflected peoples, cultures, folklore, history, heritage and geography.

The multitude of people that lined up in queues to enter the Judges’ Field stood out for the discipline they exhibited. There was total order and none tried to breach the queues – something rarely seen in any gathering – large or small – in the city.

The fans were mostly quiet except for brief intervals when some would sing out one of those unforgettable numbers of the balladeer, to be joined by a few more.

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**Courtesy: The Assam Tribune, Nov 9, 2011**
Dignity and Peace as Tributes to IconTrail to Jalukbari Smooth as Silk

UMANAND JAISWAL

Guwahati, Nov. 9: Like his creations, Bhupen Hazarika’s last journey was awe-inspiring, given the smooth manner in which it culminated at the Gauhati University campus despite apprehension in certain quarters considering the turnout at Judges Field.

The outpouring of grief and loss and the preparedness of the state and the administration are being attributed to the peaceful conduct of the proceedings, most acknowledging it as a fitting tribute to the man who tried to spread compassion, understanding and brotherhood.

According to the Kamrup (Metro) district administration, an estimated 50,000 to 60,000 mourners participated in the funeral procession while nearly 5.6 lakh turned up at Judges Field to pay their last respects.

Apart from some anxious moments when mourners stormed Judges Field after the gates were opened for chief minister Tarun Gogoi on Tuesday and their eagerness to catch the last rites this morning, the proceedings passed off smoothly, much to the relief of the administration and public.

Leading psychiatrist Jayanta Das, who was called by a senior police official this afternoon to explain the reason for the calm crowd behaviour this morning, attributed it to the “direct connect” Hazarika had with the masses mainly through his songs.”

His demise was like a loss in the family and when such things happen you are in a genuine state of mourning and don’t indulge in any misadventure. Bupenda’s staying away from home also strengthened the connection. He was the global
Senior bureaucrat Shantanu Thakur, who had gone to Mumbai to fetch the body of the legend, said there is a fundamental difference between the massive turnout witnessed in the past such as the ones during the Assam agitation and the one the city saw over the past three days. The former were protests while the ones we witnessed in wake of the legend’s demise were a spontaneous outpouring of grief and loss for a loved one. The smooth conduct showed how peaceful and dignified the Assamese society is during a crisis and the competence and preparedness of the administration.

A dedicated team of around 15 district officials led by D.C. Ashutosh Agnihotri worked round-the-clock with police personnel, a company of which was called in last night from Nalbari, to ensure that everything passed off without any hitch. CMO sources said that several rounds of meetings involving home, health, PWD and police officials were convened by chief secretary N.K. Das since the news of Hazarika’s demise reached Dispur. The administration’s swift redressal of complaints of long queues and inconvenience caused by VIPs also helped. “We could feel that there was a solemn resolve to maintain a high level of discipline,” one of them said.

An apparently relieved Agnihotri attributed the smooth proceedings to teamwork and people’s cooperation. “Even the Scouts played a big role. It was well-coordinated team effort. Everybody and every department chipped in,” he said.

Late this evening, Kalpana Lajmi said the peaceful turnout by people of ages between seven and 70 was a “remarkable salute” to the icon.

**Courtesy: The Telegraph, Nov 12, 2011**
GUWAHATI, India (Reuters) - Hundreds of thousands of mourners, including Bollywood stars and politicians, gathered on Wednesday for the cremation of one of India’s most famous folk singers, Bhupen Hazarika, who helped popularise the culture of the country’s remote northeast.

Known for portraying the social life of Assam and speaking for the poor, the 85-year-old Hazarika was a poet, composer, singer, author and filmmaker. “In Dr Hazarika’s sad demise, India has lost one of its most gifted artists,” Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said in a statement. Hazarika died in Mumbai on Saturday.

Thousands of his admirers broke into tears while slogans of “Bhupen da amor houk” (May brother Bhupen be immortal) rang in the air as his body was carried through the city to be cremated on an open pyre.

More than half-a-million people have visited the stadium where he often played and where his body had been kept since Monday.

Born in 1926 in Assam, he got a PhD from Columbia University and played across Europe, the United States and Asia. Famous for his baritone voice and heart-rending lyrics, Hazarika helped to bring his northeastern homeland to the attention of the rest of India and beyond.

Music lovers called him the Bard of the Brahmaputra, a river that runs through Assam. He also contested unsuccessfully national elections in 2004 as a candidate for the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party.

Courtesy: Reuters, Wed, Nov 9, 2011
George Eliot had rightly said, ‘Our dead are never dead to us, until we have forgotten them.’ Our beloved Bhupenda, indeed, is not dead until we keep him alive in our memories. His songs and poems will keep him alive for posterity in the hearts of his millions and millions of admirers.

By our Staff Reporter

GUWAHATI, Nov 9: In his lifetime Dr Bhupen Hazarika united people through his melodious and passionate renditions. His death also united people in a sense of grief so profound that it cut across all political, religious and linguistic barriers. Scores and scores of people gathered on Wednesday at the cremation ground in Gauhati University to pay their last homage to the jajabor. This, indeed, was the united humanity of which he had always dreamt of and sung about.

As the mortal remains of the Bard of the Brahmaputra were consigned to flames, Assam experienced deep pangs of loss and sorrow of having lost one of its greatest sons. The Brahmaputra flowed quietly as it mourned the loss of the man who had eulogized it in his immortal poems turned into mesmerizing music. Wednesday’s sunrise did not signal the dawn of a new day but the end of a glorious era in Assam’s history.

Around 7 am, the flower-bedecked hearse carrying Bhupenda’s coffin moved out of the
main gate of Judges Field where the body had been kept for two days for public viewing. Kalpana Lajmi, who was his companion for close to four decades, was by his side in his final journey. Also present were his son Tez Hazarika, close associate Kamal Kataki, nephews Mayukh Hazarika, Dawor Hazarika and Sandeep Hazarika, and few other members of the family. Thousands of people had lined on either sides of the road, many perched on trees and housetops. Amidst their sobs and wails, the jajabor embarked on his final journey. The teary-eyed people offered flowers and gamosas on the coffin as a mark of respect to the balladeer.

Finally, more than two hours later, the cortege reached the cremation ground in the Gauhati University campus, around 9.30 am. The ground was teeming with more than 20,000 mourners who had come to bid adieu to the legend, including a galaxy of celebrities, politicians and artistes.

With full honours, the 4th Battalion of the Assam Police brought down the coffin from the hearse and carried it near the 55-foot-square cemented platform where the funeral pyre had been set up. After the body was brought out of the coffin, Assam Governor JB Patnaik, Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, Opposition leader Sushma Swaraj, MP Bijoya Chakraborty, Union minister Paban Singh Ghatowar, Assam DGP Sankar Barua, xatradhikar Prem Krishna Devagoswami, MP SK Basumatary, Gauhati University Vice-Chancellor Okhil Kumar Medhi and Axam Xahitya Xabha president Rongbong Terang took turns to lay wreaths.

Prominent personalities who were present for Bhupenda’s funeral service were his brothers Samar and Nripen Hazarika, sisters-in-law Mridula Hazarika and Manisha Hazarika, ministers Himanta Biswa Sarma, Pranati Phukan, Akon Bora, Rakibul Hussain, Prithvi Majhi, Nilamoni Sen Deka, Ajanta Neog, Rajiv Lochan Pegu and Ajit Singh, MLAs Robin Bordoloi and Piyush Hazarika, Chief Secretary Naba Kumar Das, APCC president Bhubaneswar Kalita, BJP State president Ranjit Dutta, former Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, AGP president Chandra Mohan Patowary, All Assam Students’ Union (AASU) advisor Samujjal Bhattacharyya, president Sankar Prasad Rai and general secretary Tapan Gogoi, activist Akhil Gogoi, artistes Seema Biswas, Zubeen Garg, Aimee Baruah, Akashdeep, Anoorlata, Manas Robin and Sadananda Gogoi.

Tez Hazarika, Mayukh Hazarika, Dawor Hazarika and Sandeep Hazarika lifted the body on their shoulders and carried it near the funeral pyre. A grief-stricken Kalpana Lajmi broke down at the feet of her “father, brother, lover and husband” when family members were asked to offer homage to Bhupenda for the last time. Among them was also Jairam Das from Hajo. Das considers himself as Bhupenda’s son. He has been on fast since the maestro breathed his last. He was allowed to offer his last tribute to his “father”. Das weeping inconsolably at the maestro’s feet was a heart-rending moment for those present there as well as those who were glued to their television sets.

The 4th Batallion of the Assam Police gave a 21-gun salute to the bard at 10.15 am. Finally at 10.26 am, Tez lit the funeral pyre while priests chanted Vedic slokas. There was a deafening silence which was broken by the wails of the people. There was a sudden upsurge of emotions among the mourners. Everybody wanted to come near the burning pyre. Despite heavy security arrangements, the situation soon seemed to be slipping out of the control of the police and district administration. It took an emotional Tez Hazarika to pacify the crowd. Overwhelmed with the sorrow of having lit his father’s pyre and upon seeing the emotions of his father’s wailing mourners, Tez broke into tears and appealed to them to cooperate with the district administration. The pyre continued to burn till about 1 pm.

For many of Bhupenda’s admirers who could not believe that the baritone voice which had sung heart-stirring songs had fallen silent on November 5, the sight of his mortal remains burning into ashes brought them face-to-face with this harsh reality.

_Courtesy: The Sentinel, Nov, 10, 2011_
DIBRUGARH, Nov 8: Almost three crore people of Assam took a day off from their daily chores to contemplate one of the country’s biggest tragedies in recent times: the demise of their very dear Dr Bhupen Hazarika. Assam today closed down spontaneously in protest against God snatching away the life of a great son. Many said they felt this son should have lived a few more days. It has now become abundantly clear that Dr Hazarika has been the one person who could unify the Assamese sub-nationality, and was second only to Srimanta Sankardeva in being able to achieve this. While lakhs of people streamed by his body at the historic Judges’ Field in Guwahati since Monday evening, elsewhere in Assam, there have been spontaneous street-corner congregations almost everywhere. At these places, people came out in large numbers to pay obeisance to one of Assam’s greatest-ever sons.

Even in remote areas like Haluating and Borsola in Sivasagar district, the sadness among the residents over the demise of Dr Hazarika had to be seen to be believed. A school teacher of Borsola, Madhurjya Hazarika, said he has never seen such a public outpouring at the death of someone in his lifetime. Similarly, one could witness hundreds of garlanded portraits of Dr Bhupen Hazarika in thousands of street corners, clubs, etc. At all these places, candles and earthen lamps and incense sticks were burnt with ritualistic fervour. In attendance at all the places were scores of swollen-eyed fans of Dr Hazarika. Attempts to talk to them would only provoke uncontrollable crying, as if a near relative has died. Despite today being a public holiday, the Public Relations Department of the Assam Government ensured that its Field Loudspeaker Systems in the urban centres of the State were kept running, playing songs of Dr Hazarika, throughout the day.

In neighbouring Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh too, a general pall of gloom was witnessed following spread of the news that Dr Hazarika is no more. Reports said that the Nagas are in mourning over the death of Dr Hazarika. News has been received from several places in Arunachal Pradesh about condolence meetings to mourn the demise of Dr Hazarika.

*Courtesy: The Assam Tribune, Nov 9*
GUWAHATI: The mortal remains of cultural icon Bhupen Hazarika were on Wednesday consigned to flames by his son Tez Bhupen Hazarika after full state honours were accorded to him at the Gauhati University campus where thousands had turned up for his final rites. Tez lit the pyre at 10:20am after performing the rituals associated with the last rites while the singer’s companion of nearly 40 years Kalpana Lajmi sobbed and prayed with folded hands. The last post was sounded and a 21-gun salute was given to the legend before his body was lifted to the pyre. Hazarika’s body draped in the traditional gamosa reached the campus at around 10am from historic Judges Field and final tributes were paid by Assam governor J B Patnaik and chief minister Tarun Gogoi. Wreaths were placed by Union DONER minister Paban Singh Ghatowar on behalf of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, AICC general secretary Digvijay Singh on behalf of UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi and by BJP leader in Lok Sabha Sushma Swaraj. After the last respects were paid, the body was taken out of the casket and transferred to a bamboo bier and his son and nephews carried him on his final journey to the sandalwood pyre. About 70 kg of sandalwood collected from the University Botanical Garden has been used for the pyre. After lighting the pyre, Tez knelt and bowed to the people with folded hands thanking them for their love and respect for his father. Chief minister Tarun Gogoi also placed a sandalwood on the pyre

*Courtesy: Times of India, Nov 9, 2011 (PTI)*
GUWAHATI, Nov 9 (IANS): It was the end of an era as the mortal remains of the bard from Assam, Bhupen Hazarika, went up in flames Wednesday with his son Tej lighting the funeral pyre amid sobs and wails from a sea of humanity.

Heartrending scenes were witnessed at the Gauhati University campus, close to the banks of the great Asian river Brahmaputra. As the funeral pyre was lit at 10.26 a.m., chants of ‘Bhupen Hazarika amar raho’ rent the air and people broke down, with some crying loudly and others barely managing to hold back their tears. An overwhelmed Tej pleaded with the surging crowd to control themselves and maintain calm even as Hazarika’s companion of 40 years, Kalpana Lajmi, cried inconsolably, unable to check her emotions.

“I am speechless with the overwhelming response and love for my father,” an emotional Tej told IANS after performing the last rites of the 85-year-old legend.

An estimated 100,000 people were present at the funeral site, some atop trees, and others trying witness the last rites from every possible vantage point available in the area.

A 21-gun salute was offered by the Assam Police with doctors and forensic experts taking the foot impressions of the man for posterity.

Among those present at the funeral were Governor J.B. Patnaik and Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi. Also around was leader of the opposition in parliament and senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Sushma Swaraj, besides a galaxy of celebrities and eminent citizens.

The final journey of one of India’s oldest performing singers began around 7 a.m. with a multitude of people following the cortege from the historic Judges Field to the funeral site at the Gauhati University campus.

It was a tearful last journey of the bard whose baritone voice enthralled and mesmerised fans. Lajmi and 60-year-old Tej accompanied the flower bedecked hearse to the funeral site.

Hazarika died Saturday at a Mumbai hospital following a prolonged illness.

Estranged wife Priyamvada Patel, 82, who stays in Toronto in Canada, said she was saddened by Hazarika’s death.

“I am saddened to hear about the death of my son’s father. I am down with some knee ailment and so could not come,” Priyamvada said over the phone.

“I spoke to him on the phone some 10 years ago when he was unwell.”

The last rites were to be performed Tuesday, but the government had to postpone the ceremony to Wednesday following a massive public demand. Thousands came out of their homes to pay their last respects to Hazarika whose coffin was kept at Judges Field since Sunday night.

Hazarika began singing when he was just 10 years old and churned out hit after hit, numbering more than 1,500 songs until his health failed about two years ago. At 13, he sang about building a new Assam and a new India - the lyrics were his own, very powerful and contemporary.

A Dada Saheb Phalke award winner, Hazarika was born in 1926 in one of Assam’s remotest corners - Sadiya in the eastern district of Tinsukia. He grew up in the northern town of Tezpur and later went to Banaras Hindu University and completed his graduation and post-graduation in political science.

He studied with an aim to pursue a career as a lawyer in Assam, but destiny made him a mass-based singer. In 1948, Hazarika went to the US on a scholarship to study Mass Communication at Columbia University, New York. It was there that he got soaked in American folk music and later on that influenced him to bring in the folk elements in his songs - although he mostly sang the folk tunes of Assam.

Courtesy: Assam Tribune, November 9
Thousands gather for pilgrimage at the altar of Bhupenda

SAURAV BORA & SUMIR KARMAKAR

Guwahati, Nov. 15: As the swaying trail of incense rose skyward this afternoon, slowly melting into the elements, Bhupenda had become a part of the air we breathe. As prayer after prayer, written by apostles from the four corners of the earth, rose above the gentle whispers of friends and family and the adulation of hundreds of thousands who had gathered at the ceremonies, a bard had become an apostle himself, if not a God, revered and rejoiced this afternoon at his adya shraddha.

At Jalukbari, Gauhati University authorities have over the past few days put up small signs where Bhupen was cremated. “Please don’t put money here,” they say, as people turn the place into an altar. A busload of students from Chandrapur on the outskirts of the city arrived there this morning to pay homage at the site. A banner on the bus read: “Tirtha Yatra, a visit to Bhupen Hazarika’s samadhisthal” (Pilgrimage, to the site of Bhupen Hazarika’s funeral).

Across Assam and the Northeast, people today came in ones and twos and groups and droves to pray. In little gatherings on the pavement, in public fields, in naamghars, giving the people’s king a farewell that befits him. At Khanapara, at the shraddha organised by the state government, the mood was solemn. The 5,000 who had gathered clapped as music’s first family took
The Last Journey

the stage, overwhelmed by the sentiment of the people and the love they had showered on them.

“I am speechless by the outpouring of love that I have witnessed ever since I landed here. On behalf of my family I must thank the people of Assam, chief minister Tarun Gogoi for his support and Himanta Biswa Sarma for the arrangements made across the state,” Bhupendra’s son, Tez, said.

From Vedic hymns, naam proxongo, jikir, verses from the Bhagawad Gita, Quran and Bible, to Gurbani, Jain and Buddhist prayers, the venue brimmed with the auspicious, a tribute that could only be meant for the Gono Xilpi (peoples’ singer). The followers had come in from far and wide. Chandra Barsaikia, a businessman from Dhemaji, could not attend the funeral last week but was among the first to enter the grounds today. “It’s the opportunity of a lifetime and I did not want to miss it,” he said standing at the bamboo barricade.

Eighty-year-old Bhaben Deka of Baghorbari was seen standing in the queue for a long time to enter the ground. “When Bhupendra’s body was brought here, I was out of the city and today I have come here to pray for his departed soul,” he said.

Silence stole the auditorium at 1.30pm when a three-member troupe from Ved Vidyalaya, Rupnagar, chanted hymns from the Vedas, followed by chants the Bhagvad Gita and verses from the Naam ghoxa by Dimbeswar Bhuyan and his troupe from Luitkonwar Rudra Baruah State Music College. Members of the Kasturba Ashram recited verses from the Upanishads thereafter.

The imam of Bura Jame Masjid and his group recited verses from the Quran, while Shamim Ahmed’s troupe sang a jikir: Moitu kisu najanilu Allah/murukhe eko nubujilu Allah e/Einu bore ghar kalia/Ka loi xajisa dhan Allah... (I don’t know, Allah for whom/You built the grand house, for whom You created wealth oh Allah...).

For those in attendance, it was as if Bhupenda was just there, Nepali cap in place, eyes shut, fingers dancing across his harmonium, singing his Mahabahu Brahmaputra, the story of the great arch of the Lohit and the peoples who live on its shores.

Gyani Ranjit Singh’s gurbani and a prayer by Jaikumar Jain and his group from Digambar Jain Samaj added the spartan Jain touch while Bhante Baba and his troupe from Amingaon recited a Buddhist prayer. The Christians of the region were represented by pastor Aziz-ul Haq of Guwahati Baptist Church and Fr Solomon from St Joseph’s Church.

Dispur left no stone unturned, the way it has so far, to make the function a success. From Scouts to medical teams to policemen, things were in place from the first minute. Four companies of Assam police, each comprising 70 personnel, and two platoons of women personnel, were deployed in and around the ground. At least 40 women police comprised each platoon. “Apart from the police, 150 volunteers of Scouts and Guides are helping us conduct the programme, to make sure that people can attend the prayer meet for Bhupenda,” senior superintendent of police (city) Apurba Jibon Baruah told The Telegraph. IGP (central western range), G.P. Singh oversaw the security arrangements, while Kamrup (metro) deputy commissioner Ashutosh Agnihotri ensured the smooth conduct of the programme.

The AJYCP put up drinking water stalls for the people. “We made drinking water arrangements for people. Besides, 300 earthen lamps have been lit outlining the words Bhupendaloi shraddhanjali,” Sanjib Rai Choudhury, vice-president of the AJYCP city committee, said.

Leaders cutting across political beliefs attend the funeral ceremony of Dr Bhupen Hazarika.
Guwahati, Nov. 15: An American daughter-in-law whose uncle is a jazz musician, a sister-in-law of Bengali origin who can carry any Assamese tune to perfection, nephews and nieces from across the globe carrying with them the music of the land, and now the grandson who is “interested in music and is inspired by his grandfather’s music” — Bhupen Hazarika’s Nizarapar continues to be the confluence it has always been.

Dressed in a white mekhela sador, Bhupen Hazarika’s daughter-in-law Candence stood out in the crowd. She belongs to a musical family in America — her uncle Chico Hamilton was a jazz musician. He played the drums; Candence says “drums imitate heartbeat”.

“My father was an actor and my uncle Chico was a musician. And today I am glad to be a part of a family of such musical excellence,” said Candence.

Manisha Hazarika has long become the Axomiya buwari (Assamese daughter-in-law), though she had stepped into this house as a Bengalor jiyori (Bengal’s daughter). Widow of Jayanta Hazarika, she is a singer who can carry off an Assamese number with just the right fricatives. Her son Mayukh, a known singer settled in New Delhi, has taken the music with him wherever he goes.

“I have carried the music that I learnt here to every place I went. Now it is our responsibility to carry forward his music,” said Mayukh.

The youngest in her generation, Kuwoli Hazarika, is a fourth year music student. Daughter of Bhupenda’s younger brother Samar Hazarika, she plans to become a doctor but not at the cost of music that runs in her blood.

“I am a student of Class XII and also a fourth year student of music. I was exposed to music at a very early age as everyone from bordeuta (uncle Bhupen Hazarika) to cousins, everyone
The Last Journey

has been associated with music," said Kuwoli. The Hazari family, with all generations, came together in 1995 to bring out an album, Nizaraparor Xur.

Hazarika’s sisters, Sudakshina Hazarika and Kabita Hazarika and their children, his brothers Amar Hazarika, Nripen Hazarika, Balen Hazarika and Samar Hazarika came forward to lend their voice in the album. The younger generation included their children — Sandip, Papor, Rituparna, Rijushree, Rishira, Niyor, Dubori, Angana, Udip, Mayukh and Dawor. “I was a child. I still remember how I lisped my lines,” said Dawor Hazarika, who now studies in an engineering college. As everyone assembled under the roof of their Nizarapar residence for Hazarika’s shraddha, their heart throbbed in unison to a single tune — the pandit’s mantras as Tez Hazari sat next to him and repeated every word.

Tez’s son, Akash, clad in a white dhoti and vest, was a picture of composure as he sat beside his father and listened attentively to the mantras. Around 2,000 guests and well-wishers came to pay their last tribute.

Celebrities and ministers became one with the crowd. Chief secretary Naba Kumar Das, Rajya Sabha member and Assam PCC president Bhubaneswar Kalita, state water resource minister Prithibi Majhi, former chief minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta and singer Angaraag Mahanta were among those who visited the balladeer’s home today.

Courtesy: The Telegraph, Nov 16

Fans shaving off their heads on the day of adya shraddha of Dr Bhupen Hazarika.
By our Staff Reporter

GUWAHATI, Nov 15: Thousands of people, across the varied strata of society, gathered in different parts of the State on Tuesday to pay their final respects to Dr Bhupen Hazarika in his addhya shraddha. The huge number of people who thronged the different venues, where prayers and shraddhanjali ceremonies were held, with candles and earthen lamps resulted in the creation of a spectacle that would remain in one’s heart for ever, even prompting the legend’s longtime companion Kalpana Lajmi to comment: “Such a scene has never been witnessed before, and in all probability, will never occur again.” The addhya shraddha began at the bard’s residence early in the morning on Tuesday amidst the chanting of religious hymns and prayers. The balladeer’s son, Tez Bhupen Hazarika, and nephew Sandeep Hazarika took the lead in performing the rituals, which were also attended by the rest of the family. After the shraddha in the morning, Dr Hazarika’s grandson Sage Akash Hazarika planted two chandan samplings in the memory of his iconic grandfather.

Besides a host of dignitaries and members from the cultural fraternity, more than 5,000 people had gathered at the bard’s Nizarapar residence. The lighting of earthen lamps and dhuna by all the visitors led to the creation of a tranquil and highly spiritual ambience. APCC working president Bhubabeshwar Kalita, former Chief Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, MP Birendra Kumar Baishya, State Chief Secretary Naba Das, IGP GP Singh, AGP president Chandra Mohan Patowary, MP Kumar Deepak Das, KMSS leader Akhil Gogoi and drama personality Arun Sharma, amongst others, were some of those present at Nizarapar. ULFA chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa and his colleague Pradip Gogoi were also present in the ceremony. All the leaders present in the ceremony reiterated their commitment towards preserving the works of the legend for the generations to come. Bhubaneswar Kalita said that the memorial centre which would be set up at the site of cremation would be transformed into a research centre for studies on the bard’s works, life and times. An all-religion prayer meeting was also held at the State Veterinary college ground in Khanapara. The prayer meeting, which began with State Revenue Minister Prithbi Majhi inaugurating the ceremonial lamp, was attended by various religious groups. All the family members of late Dr Hazarika attended the meet. Tez Hazarika thanked the people of Assam profusely for their love and support. He said that he would ensure that his father’s works were translated into English.

Meanwhile, in another breathtaking spectacle of love and respect, more than 10,000 earthen lamps were lit around the entire periphery of Dighalipukhuri, where the All Assam Students’ Union (AASU) had organized its tribute function.

Courtesy: The Assam Tribune, Nov 16
“Bhupen Hazarika was a legendary singer, composer, lyricist, music director, filmmaker and politician from the state of Assam. He influenced many people throughout the country and in the neighboring countries. His song reflected his views on the current situation of society, culture and politics. He composed songs in Assamese, Bengali, Hindi and English. He played an important role in visualizing the culture and art of Assam to other parts of India and the world,” she added.

By our Staff Reporter

GUWAHATI, Nov 15: The addhya shraddha of Dr Bhupen Hazarika was observed on Tuesday not only in Assam, but also in other parts of the country. In Kolkata, where the bard’s songs are very popular and where he had spent a major portion of his life, a shraddhanjali ceremony was organized where a number of speakers recounted their experiences with the legend. The shraddhanjali ceremony was organized at the Assam House in Kolkata by a group of journalists from Assam who had been sent to West Bengal on a goodwill mission by the Directorate of Information and Public Relations. Today’s sombre ceremony, which was attended by a number of government officials, journalists and fans of the legend, began with the lighting of the ceremonial lamp.

The group will immerse Bhupenda’s ashes in the sea on November 19. Commerce Advisor to the Government of Assam Gokul Mohan Hazarika said that the group had already requested the West Bengal Government to name a road in West Bengal after Dr Hazarika. He said, “Bhupenda is as popular in West Bengal as he is in Assam. Editor of Bhorer Barta, a Bengali newspaper, Himangshu Chatterjee has already undertaken a project to translate his works into English.”

Courtesy: The Sentinel, Nov 15

GUWAHATI: The Nehru Centre in London will organize a shradhanjali programme in memory of Bhupen Hazarika on November 18, said Assamese NRI coordinator for UK Rini Kakati.

“The condolence meeting will be chaired by Chair of the Commonwealth Journalists’ Association (UK) and editorial director of Global magazine Rita Payne. Besides, Jitendra Kumar, first secretary of Indian High Commission (Consular and Community Affairs) and Gulam Mustafa, director of Udichi, UK, Kailash Budhwar of BBC Hindi Service and Ashis Ray of The Times of India will join the condolence meeting,” said Kakati in an email.

“Bhupen Hazarika was a legendary singer, composer, lyricist, music director, filmmaker and politician from the state of Assam. He influenced many people throughout the country and in the neighboring countries. His song reflected his views on the current situation of society, culture and politics. He composed songs in Assamese, Bengali, Hindi and English. He played an important role in visualizing the culture and art of Assam to other parts of India and the world,” she added.

Courtesy: TNN Nov 15, 2011
OUR BUREAU
Nov. 11: Thousands of people in different corners of Assam paid their last respects to Bhupen Hazarika today before his ashes were immersed in different rivers, including his favourite — the Brahmaputra.

The people of Jorhat bid a tearful adieu to their favourite singer, whose ashes were immersed in the Brahmaputra at 10.30 this morning at Neematighat, while their Tezpur counterparts immersed his ashes at Jahaj Ghat around 4pm.

Thousands of Tezpur residents turned up at the Church Field, where the balladeer had started his career under the tutelage of Bishnu Prasad Rabha and Jyoti Prasad Agarwalla.

People are also mulling a samadhi or a memorial in the name of Hazarika at Tol Gereki alongside the samadhi of Bishnu Prasad Rabha. A decision on this, however, will be taken only once Bhupen Hazarika’s brother Nipen Hazarika returns after the shraddha ceremony.

In Golaghat, the ashes were taken out in a procession and immersed in the Dhansiri around 11am. Gayan bayan was performed throughout the journey.

In Guwahati, there was a steady stream of visitors to Hazarika’s Nizarapar residence, with people dropping in to convey their sympathies to the family members.

Assam State Women’s Congress members, along with other artistes who had the privilege of closely knowing the singer, also visited the family today.

Mourners are still thronging the cremation spot at Gauhati University in Jalukbari to light earthen lamps in memory of the singer, while the makeshift auditorium, where the mortal remains of Hazarika were kept for two days at Judges Field, was dismantled today.

The people of Dhubri bid a tearful farewell to Hazarika and Gouripur residents to a true friend, as the legend’s asthi (urn of ashes) was immersed in the Brahmaputra-Gadadhar confluence here.

Thousands of people, led by various organisations, took out a procession with his asthi, chanting hymns and playing his songs.

When the procession reached the historic Netai Dhubini-Mahabeer Chilarai Park on the riverbank, Assam Police personnel presented a guard of honour, following which the ashes were taken to the middle of the confluence on a boat by residents and administration officials.

Dhubri deputy commissioner Sunil Dutta immersed the ashes at the confluence at 12.10pm today, after priests performed relevant rituals.

People here, while mourning the demise of Hazarika, remembered his dual connection with the district — as a student of Dhubri Government Boys Higher Secondary School and in getting global recognition for Goalpariya lokgeet.

Principal of the school, Sankar Pada Sanyal, told The Telegraph that Hazarika had studied there in Classes III and IV.

“According to school documents, Hazarika took admission in Class III on May 6, 1932, when his
father, Nilkanta Hazarika, was transferred to the then Goalpara district as deputy inspector of schools. They stayed on Daffrin Road in Dhubri town," he said, adding that Hazarika had studied at Sonaram Higher Secondary School in Guwahati before coming to Dhubri.

He said they were planning to construct a permanent memorial in the school for Hazarika, besides organising his adya shradhha on November 15 on the school premises.

Retired principal of the school, Manju Goswami, said for a cross-section of Dhubri residents, the legend’s association with the school was a matter of pride. This apart, various socio-cultural and student organisations paid homage to the bard at Gouripur, where Hazarika had spent a lot of time with the royal family and highlighted Goalpariya lokgeet by guiding and encouraging its biggest exponent, Pratima Barua Pandey, who was subsequently awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award and conferred the Padma Shri.

A nearly half-a-kilometre long procession was taken out in Gouripur town from the statue of Pratima Barua Pandey with Hazarika's ashes, which were subsequently immersed in the Gadadhar.

Prabir Coomar Barua, a member of the royal family, said the people of Gouripur would remain indebted to Hazarika for his contribution to getting global recognition for Goalpariya lokgeet.

Dhubri deputy commissioner Sunil Dutta said proposals were pouring in on steps being taken to preserve the memory of Hazarika, but a final decision would be taken after considering their pros and cons.

In Goalpara, Hazarika’s ashes were also immersed in the Brahmaputra today, after being taken to the riverbank in a procession.

In Bilasipara, the ashes were immersed in the Gourang.

In Bongaigaon, the ashes have been kept in the Birjhara Higher Secondary School field to allow people to pay their last respects and would be immersed tomorrow, a Bongaigaon district administration official said.

In Dibrugarh, too, the ashes will be immersed in the Brahmaputra at Kachari Ghat at 9am tomorrow. The Lahowal College has named its auditorium after the legend.

In Tinsukia, however, the ashes will be immersed on Sunday, after being sent to Sadiya, the birthplace of Hazarika, and to Parashuram Kund in Arunachal Pradesh.

In Sivasagar, too, the immersion is slated for Sunday. Naam and kirtan are being performed continuously at Boarding Field, where Hazarika’s ashes have been kept. Students of different schools paid homage to the singer at the field today.

The Dikhowporiya Sanmilita Yuba Mancha has shown three sites to the district administration and asked for the allotment of one for erection of a statue of the singer.

By our Staff Reporter
GUWAHATI, Nov 10: The ashes of jajabor Bhupen Hazarika will be immersed in all the rivers, both in India as well as abroad, which find mention in the passionate and melodious renditions of the bard. This initiative has been taken up by the Axam Xahitya Xabha (AXX), the State’s apex literary body.

AXX general secretary Parmnanda Rajbongshi informed mediapersons on Thursday that arrangements had been made to immerse the ashes of the legend in the Thames in London by the London chapter of the literary body. America, the ashes will be immersed in the Atlantic Ocean by Washington’s Namita Das, in China’s Hwang-Ho river by Suresh Garodia, in the Arabian Sea by Dr Bipul Bhuyan and Dr Dipali Bhuyan, in the Kaveri in Ahmedabad by Bireshwar Kalita and in the Teesta river by the All Assam Gorkha Students’ Union. Arrangements have also been made to immerse his ashes in all the north-eastern States as well as in New Delhi. In fact, at the initiative of the Assam Association, New Delhi, the ashes of Bhupenda reached the national capital on Thursday. The ashes will be kept at the Sankardev Bhavan there till November 20 for people to pay homage before being immersed. Meanwhile, thousands attended a sarva dharma sabha organized by Gauhati University at the site of the maestro’s cremation on Thursday. In some districts of the State, the legend’s ashes have already been immersed.

According to family sources, the ardhyashraddha of the bard will be held on November 15 at the Chandmari AEI playground in Guwahati.

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